Golf Volvo Masters

Rain in Spain fails to dampen Monty's day

David Davies in Jerez

LAST month Colin Montgomerie played the back nine holes of the final round in the Linde German Masters in 32 shots. In the process he went from seventh to second place and as a result won $100,200 more than he might otherwise have done. "That," he said on Sunday, "was where I won my fifth successive European No 1 title."

That is the theory, but in practice Montgomerie won it sitting in the clubhouse of the Montecastillo course last Sunday without having hit a shot during a final day of rain and thunder and lightning that resulted in the 10th Volvo Masters being called off in mid-afternoon.

The abandonment left Montgomerie literally high and dry and also gave Lee Westwood his first win on the European circuit. The 24-year-old Englishman won $277,200 for finishing first, plus $120,260 from the Volvo bonus pool, to take him to third place overall in the Volvo Rankings with total winnings of $983,160. Montgomerie amassed $1,334,245 to take his total winnings in 10 years on the Tour to more than $10 million.

Like Montgomerie, Westwood was confined to the sanctuary of the clubhouse, and his three-round total of 200, 16 under par, left him three shots clear of Padraig Harrington and four in front of José Maria Olazábal. The youngster from Worksop is also a millionaire, having won $2,085,510 in his four years on the European Tour.

Asked if he had any plans for the latest large cheque, he said: "No." "What about a house?" he was asked. "Got one," he replied with a grin. "A car?" "Got one," he said, with an even bigger grin.

Westwood is off now to play two tournaments in Japan and the Australian Open where he plans to add substantially to his earnings. "I'm playing as well as I ever have in my life," he said. "When I play well and putt well I feel I can control a tournament."

He would have preferred to have played the fourth round here simply because he felt so confident. Nevertheless he was relieved to have registered a win, regardless of how it was achieved. "It would have been a good season anyway," he said, "but it would have felt a bit empty without a win."

This year he has played 25 counting events for the Volvo rankings, won one, been placed second twice and had a high proportion of top-10 finishes. A year ago he finished sixth in the rankings and set himself the task of improving on that position this season.

"I suppose next year I'll have to try and improve on third, and that probably means winning it. Still, someone's got to beat Monty some time."

Montgomerie arrived at Montecastillo leading Bernhard Langer, second in the rankings, by just over $75,150, all of which was earned over that back nine in the German Masters. "That gave me some elbow room," said the Scot, who knew that wherever Langer finished he would have to be one step ahead. By the end of the tournament he had accomplished that satisfactorily, lying eighth on 207 to Langer's joint 15th on 210.

Montgomerie's fifth successive title surpasses the mark set by Peter Oosterhuis in 1971-74, and Oosty concedes that the Scot's achievement is of much greater import than his own.

"I have an incredible desire and ambition to succeed," Montgomerie said. "That's kept me going throughout my career, it's never wilted at all and it's probably my greatest asset.

"To stay at the top in any business you have to improve every year," he added. "If I had stood still I would have been overtaken, so for that reason this must be the most satisfying win of the five.

"I feel I have improved every year. The first year, 1993, I was lying fifth and had to win the [...] Masters to win the Order of [...] and did so. At that time, on a s[...] one to 10, my game was about [...] Now I would say it's about [...] It'll never be a 10 because [...] has ever been a 10."

The winning of the fifth t[...] not, though, the highlight of [...] season. "The best feeling all [...]" said Montgomerie, "was when [...] my ball land on the green in [...] gles match with Scott Hoch in [...] Ryder Cup." As soon as it did [...] knew that the cup was won, [...] retained, and that it was he [...] done it".

But then, that has been the [...] so often over the past five years [...] remarkable golfer achieved a [...] of results that are unlikely to [...] equalled, let alone exceeded.

Despite hints to the con[...] Montgomerie made a surprise [...] sion on Monday not to join the [...] Tour next season. How[...] although he will remain on [...] European Tour he will play [...] tournaments in the United Sta[...] have decided for several reas[...] maintain my current Europea[...] ing status for 1998, but I sh[...] playing a considerably red[...] schedule in Europe," he said.

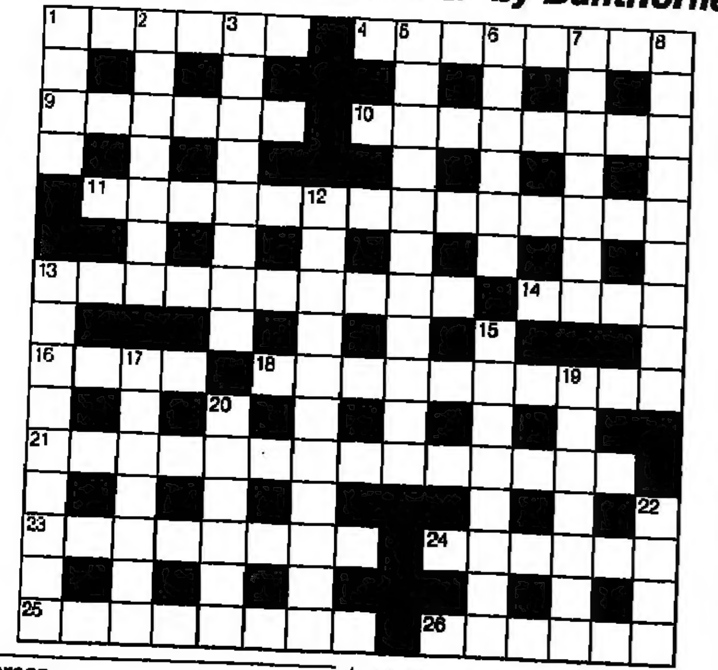
On the other side of the At[...] Tiger Woods finished top of [...] United States money list after [...] Duval won his third consec[...] tournament, the PGA Tour Ch[...] onship in Houston, Texas.

Duval shot a 68 for a 273 to [...] Davis Love III a chance to edg[...] Woods. He finished one s[...] ahead of Jim Furyk and two b[...] than Love.

Woods finished 12th but [...] record earnings of $2,066,8[...] console him. Duval was second [...] the list with $1,885,308, and [...] was third with $1,635,953.

Montgomerie . . . opting to stay in Europe PHOTO: DESMOND BOYLAN

Cryptic crossword by Bunthorne



Across

1 Can't stand Eliot, Hughes? stand back! (6)
4 Having excellent name among cats, English backed spread in Latin-America (8)
9, 10 Sound from policemen, weaver and journalist (6-8)
11, 21 "OK cause for mending hedges? Oo! Bog off! (Robert Frost's territorial imperative) (4,6,4,4,10)
13 "If", as it were, a pratfall! (5,5)
14 Dog's breakfast served here? (4)
16 Redcap surrounded by eleven fighting men (4)
18 Theatrical performer, moved by his lines (10)
21 See 11
23 Not done in force without French aid perhaps (5,3)
24 The eighth sublime majestic clown (6)
25 Antonio intended to admit the right Swiss types (8)
26 Bare essentials without, God willing, a modifier (6)

Down

1 Game of chance for a g-girl's best friend? (4)
2 High class (3,4)
3 Bird held in drain (8)
5 Spirits in line with Ulster's planters? To wit, h-historic settlement! (6-5)
6 Mutatis mutatis taking time out with withdrawal in mind (6)
7 Hold a candle to match (7)
8 This one should get the post (9)
12 Bolter's return. It's an old custom (11)
13 "Never Let Go!" — You've seen the movie! Now read the wrapper! (5,4)
15 100 refined types doing badly as Holy Willies? (4,4)
17 Tender present tender (7)
19 Wrong river. Correction! (7)
20 Take the money in French francs? (6)
22 Night flyers at rest attempt this! (4)

Last week's solution

T	H	O	U	G	H	T		T	I	T	A	N	I	C
R		L		O		H		H		H		O		R
E	L	D	E	R	T	R	E	E		I	N	D	I	A
V		B		E		E		P		R		O		C
I	D	L	E		H	E	R	A	L	D	D	U	C	K
		U		B		M		S		F		B		E
	J	E	R	O	M	E		S	A	L	U	T	E	R
				U		N		I		O				
B	A	S	E	N	J	I		N	O	O	D	L	E	
U		E		C		N		G		R		I		
M	A	C	H	I	N	A	T	O	R		A	B	E	D
M		L		N		B		F		B		R		U
A	Z	U	R	E		O	S	T	R	A	C	I	S	M
L		D		S		A		H		C		U		A
O	V	E	R	S	E	T		E	S	K	I	M	O	S

Motor Sport Rally Australia

McRae takes it to the wire

David Williams in Perth

COLIN McRAE held off strong challenges from Carlos Sainz and Tommi Makinen last Sunday to win Rally Australia, a fine performance that keeps alive his hopes of regaining the world rally championship in the last event of the season, the RAC Rally at the end of this month.

The Scot has won the RAC for the past two years and must feel confident of completing a hat-trick, but this time Makinen's Mitsubishi needs only to finish in the top six to make the Finn champion and dash the title from McRae's grasp.

"We've got it all to gain and Tommi's got it all to lose," said McRae after his six-second victory. "I'm just going to try and do my best to win the RAC."

The Australian win was McRae's fourth of the season and the 12th of his career. It was also one of his finest, for the pressure was unrelenting. He knew that only a win would give him any chance of becoming champion.

His Subaru led for most of the distance but favourable road conditions allowed his championship rivals Makinen and the Spaniard Sainz in a Ford to come within striking distance.

McRae struggled for grip on most of the special stages, whe[...] the rules state that the leader must go first. As he swept gra[...] from the road surface he was helping his pursuing rivals, and conditions were so bad that at the end of the second leg he opted to concede the lead to Sainz.

McRae's chances of winning improved dramatically on the final morning when Sainz's engine blew up, but Makinen the[...] launched a desperate assault that sliced McRae's advantage from 51 seconds overnight to only 13 with a single 19-mile special stage remaining.

Clearly Makinen's team Mitsubishi were prepared to gamble everything on winning [...] Australia rather than give McRae a glimmer of a chance in Brit[...] McRae had made a series of minor errors that all but played into Makinen's hands.

Victory required an abrupt [...] unflustered change of gear and as his mechanics clustered nervously round the radio, McRae threw caution to the winds. Les[...] than a mile from the stage finish he nearly lost control of his Subaru as it pitched through the air at 120mph.

"The worst bit wasn't the stage," he insisted afterwards. "It was the nine minutes while we waited for Tommi's time."

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The Washington Post Le Monde

Algeria regime 'was behind Paris bombs'

John Sweeney and Leonard Doyle

BOMBS in Paris, help for Saddam Hussein's programme to produce weapons of mass destruction, the regime of terror at home — today Algeria's secret police state is indicted by one of its own members for crimes against humanity.

"Yussuf-Joseph" was a career secret agent in Algeria's *sécurité militaire* until he defected to Britain, bringing with him the deepest secrets of the regime's links with President Saddam. His wife and children were spirited out. Two and a half years later they are still waiting for political asylum.

"Joseph" spent 14 years as part of the Algerian police state. In one gulag torture chamber he saw "a human eye lying on a table, and in the eye a fork".

He now risks assassination for speaking out publicly. He said:

❑ The bombs that outraged Paris in 1995 — blamed on Muslim fanatics — were the handiwork of the Algerian secret service. They were part of a propaganda war aimed at galvanising French public opinion against the Islamists.

❑ The Algerian police state is hiding material for President Saddam's nuclear, chemical and biological warfare programme. Intelligence agents from the two countries are collaborating to defeat the United Nations sanctions against Iraq.

❑ The relentless massacres in Algeria are the work of secret police and army death squads.

❑ Algerian intelligence agents routinely bribe European police, journalists and MPs. Joseph said he paid one French MP, who cannot be named for legal reasons, more than 500,000 francs (about $90,000) in bribes.

❑ The killing of many foreigners was organised by the secret police, not Islamic extremists.

Joseph, a strained, pale, intense man, described the most secret workings of the Algerian police state. He revealed that the constant terror in which civilians live is orchestrated by two shadowy figures, more powerful than the nominal president, General Liamine Zeroual.

The police state is run as the private fiefdom of two men: Mohammed Mediane, codename "Tewfik", and General Smain Lamari, the most feared names in Algeria. They are, respectively, head of the Algerian secret service, the DRS, and its sub-department, the counter intelligence agency, the DCE.

"[President] Zeroual is just the cherry on the cake," said Joseph. "Tewfik is much more important and Smain is his enforcer."

Since the military coup in 1992 after the first round of elections in which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was set to take power, the

continued on page 4

US judge sets convicted nanny free



A smiling Louise Woodward, with her lawyer Barry Scheck at her side, in court in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Monday as Judge Hiller Zobel ruled that she could go free after serving 279 days for the manslaughter of baby Matthew Eappen. The judge overruled an earlier jury verdict that the British au pair was guilty of second-degree murder, with a minimum sentence of 15 years. 'Mercy is not less than appropriate,' Judge Zobel said. 'It is time to bring the judicial part of this extraordinary matter to a compassionate conclusion' PHOTO: JIM BOURG

A compassionate conclusion to a sorry tale

EDITORIAL

IT WAS somehow fitting that word of the revised judgment of Louise Woodward came not via the Internet, as advertised in advance, but through the old-fashioned means of a courtroom leak. Judge Hiller Zobel's attempt to make history by posting his ruling on the Web came unstuck; his e-mail — complete with the authenticating code words "facts are stubborn things" — did not reach the selected website providers in time. It was left to American television to break the news, based on a whisper from one of the lawyers. All this seems fitting given the content of Judge Zobel's decision. It rang solidly of old-fashioned wisdom, undistracted by the noise and pressure of the global electronic mob which had metaphorically massed outside his courtroom.

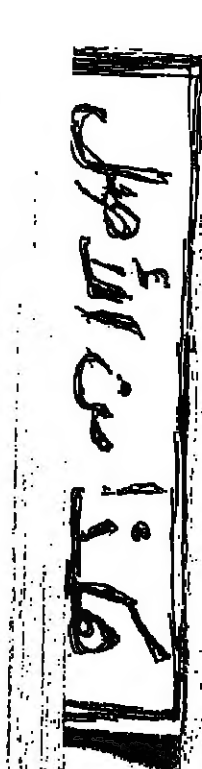
Members of the Massachusetts jury which found Ms Woodward guilty of second-degree murder have been quick to endorse the new outcome. Several of them said manslaughter was the option they would have chosen — had the teenager's own lawyers not denied them that choice. Manslaughter struck them as a fair description of the grave events of last February. As they saw it, Louise Woodward was not a sadistic child-killer, but nor did Matthew Eappen's death come out of the clear blue sky. Something untoward had happened that winter day. It wasn't the action of an evil woman. Perhaps it was no more than an accident or a loss of control. But something did happen, and manslaughter seems to capture it. Judge Zobel said Ms Woodward's actions indicated "confusion, inexperience, frustration and some anger" but not "malice in the legal sense". None of us will ever know for certain, but that sounds like a wise assessment. His judgment that Ms Woodward had already served a sufficient jail sentence is equally laudable.

Now what? For the women and men in yellow T-shirts who have turned the Rigger pub in Elton, Cheshire, into a Justice for Louise HQ, the struggle continues. They want a campaign to clear the 19-year-old's name completely, insisting that she did nothing at all — ever — that may have led to baby Matthew's death. Their feelings are understandable, but they may find less sympathy outside their village now than they did before Judge Zobel's declaration that Louise Woodward is not a murderer. Before this week many Britons, and some Americans, believed that a miscarriage of justice had taken place. That view seems harder to sustain now.

For everyone else, a moment of reflection might be in order. Some people might want to rethink their earlier condemnation of American justice. The Massachusetts rule enabled a judge to correct an apparent error within days; the British system takes much longer — as the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four can testify.

It is also worth pondering the degree of fury unleashed on the dead baby's parents, and particularly the mother, Deborah Eappen. Why did a bereaved young couple become such rapid hate figures? Is Britain's jingoistic support for "one of our own" so great that it trumps our sympathy for a pair of foreigners? Was some of that hostility, either here or in America, further stirred by the fact that Matthew was a product of mixed-race marriage? Or did this entire story really centre on society's enduring discomfort with the professional woman? Ms Eappen not only faced taunts and hate-mail but also found herself in the dock, charged with the terrible crime of going out to work as a doctor and leaving her child with an au pair. Along with her, working mothers everywhere were on trial. If we in Britain can ditch that attitude, and replace it with a resolve to correct some of the inadequacies of our own child-care system, then at least some good might come from this sorry, sorry tale.

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK18	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80



Who watches over the UN's Iraqi watchmen?

I AM dismayed that there still appears to be absolutely no understanding of what Iraq has been subjected to over the last seven years of sanctions (Iraq defies UN with bans and threats, November 9). Although I write in a purely personal capacity, I have been involved in a number of United Nations missions where food availability and malnutrition in Iraq have been documented. Few appear to want to know what is being done to Iraq. In addition, the warnings of the developing hatred by ordinary people throughout the Middle East for the United States with its double standards, and Britain too for its supine complicity, continue to fall on deaf ears.

Certainly, food availability has been improved under the oil-for-food deal. A basic survival ration is now provided, and more drugs and medicines are available. Both sets of provisions are, however, insufficient. Children are malnourished, adults are underweight, medical services are in a shambles, water and sanitation is atrocious and the ration consists of basic fundamentals only, with the supplementary foods necessary to provide a balanced diet costing several thousand times what they did before 1990. Thus, as a direct result of sanctions, there is excessive mortality at all ages.

The frustration of the Iraqis can be understood. The requirements for the ending of sanctions have been continuously changed, much of the weapons inspection is a game, and the UN presence — all paid for by Iraq — is now overwhelming. How can it be that the Security Council continues to impose a process that is destroying a country and killing many of its most vulnerable civilians in the name of humanity and human rights? As perceptively noted by Juvenal some 2,000 years ago: *"Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?"*
(Prof) Peter L Pellett,
University of Massachusetts,
Amherst, USA

THERE are anomalies relating to the UN's sabre-rattling regarding Iraq's refusal to allow in US inspectors and the continuing embargo.

The countries on the Security Council (primarily the US, Britain and France) armed Iraq in the first place, so must have an inventory of weaponry supplied. One also wonders whether the UN has a fiscal interest in the continuation of the embargo, since instead of being in its usual state of financial frailty, it has $100 million allocated every 90 days to cover the costs of implementing Security Council Resolution 986, the — for Iraq — woefully inadequate oil-for-food deal.

In 1995, the World Food Programme wrote that: "Time is running out for the children of Iraq." The latest embargo-related child mortality figures show that time ran out for 1,211,285 children between August 1990 — when sanctions were implemented — and August 1997. While Britain and the US bleat about the rights of the UN inspectors, they might also reflect on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Felicity Arbuthnot,
London

THE selective US reaction to foreign events is unceasingly amazing. Iran bombards opposition guerrillas in southern Iraq, the US dispatches the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz to the Gulf (The Week, October 12). Turkey invades and massacres hundreds of opposition guerrillas in northern Iraq, and not a peep out of the US. I would hazard that more Kurds have been killed since they came under US "protection" than under Saddam Hussein's.

Hizbullah abides by an agreement to target only occupation forces while Israel bombards guerrillas and civilians indiscriminately, yet it is Hizbullah that is included in the US state department's list of terrorist organisations.
Mahfouz Y El-Tawil,
Esbjerg, Denmark

Profiting from anti-Semitism

ALTHOUGH the Swedish government and bankers deny direct knowledge of Nazi aims or involvement with commercial transactions, the fact remains that many people in Sweden profited enormously by supporting or providing material to the Nazis (Swedes sacked Jews to please Nazis, November 2).

However, if Sweden wishes to continue with the notion (or fantasy) that they were neutral during the second world war, then the current government, albeit 50 years later, has an obligation to seek out and punish the Swedish corporations that considered a few dead Jews an irrelevance when set against company profits. The shareholders of these companies, while disassociated from the original acts, should have to pay for murder. The Swedish government could at least consider a withholding tax for any corporation or individual who avoided or deliberately contravened the neutrality laws.
Terry Webb,
Gibsons, BC, Canada

THE policies of Swedish companies you report were not exclusive to the Swedes. Documents in the Public Record Office in London show that in April 1933 British directors of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, in which the British government held a majority shareholding, asked the Foreign Office if the government would object to their plan to force the retirement of Jewish directors of its German sales subsidiary. They explained that they feared that, if the company retained its Jewish employees, sales would suffer. The government replied that the decision was a matter for the company.

The company first dismissed the German Jews. Later, deciding that employing Jews of any nationality would prejudice sales, it dismissed all its non-German Jews. Nowadays, the company trades as British Petroleum.
(Dr) Louise London,
London

In thrall to the donor's diktat

GOOD governance, meaning democracy, free speech etc, is the in-word in the "donor" community these days — following in the footsteps of "development" and "structural adjustment". It is the latest hoop through which poor countries must jump if they wish to receive "aid".

Zambia is deemed to have failed to have jumped through that hoop since imposing a state of emergency following a recent failed coup attempt. As a result, "donor" funds have been suspended by several organisations, including the World Bank. The impact of this is not felt by the offending government officials, but by the ordinary people of Zambia. The example closest to me is that of the company in which my husband is employed. "Donor" funds keep the company going, because few other people or organisations have funds for major expenditure in the current economic conditions. That company's existence is now severely threatened by the suspension of payments.

I know the arguments: that recipient governments have to be "encouraged" to use the aid funds for the purpose for which they were given, not for lining their own pockets; that if the people suffer, they will put pressure on their government representatives to conform to the principles of good governance. But now consider this: the state of emergency was declared on a Thursday. I heard about the suspension of funds on a Monday. The "donors" do not seem to have wasted much time on analysing the impact of their actions on the people of Zambia.

Why does the World Bank consider the declaration of a state of emergency to be a crucial issue now? Zambians lived under one for decades in Kenneth Kaunda's days and in the early years of Frederick Chiluba's presidency — the aid money flowed then. Has the World Bank solicited the opinions of ordinary Zambians to find out what they really want? Will the suspension of aid change people's opinions of the leaders?

Finally, is this really about helping the people of developing nations such as Zambia or is it about power and control of their economies by the West? If the latter, let's stop using the words "donor" and "aid".

There is a new political age in Africa: old local dictatorships have fallen, and the struggling infant democracies are falling victim to the economic dictators of the West. Is that really "good governance"?
Name and address supplied

Cubans ready to risk change

UNTIL my first visit to Cuba in July, I was an ardent supporter of Fidel Castro's regime. However, I can no longer agree with views such as those of Jonathan Steele, who believes all is relatively well in Cuba considering the hardships it faces (Havana good time, October 26).

The standard of living since 1992 has dropped to one of its lowest levels since the revolution began in 1959. The population admires Che Guevara as a martyr but views Castro as a character living in the past who won't make concessions for anyone. Food rations are decreasing, medicine is becoming a commodity and doctors are making less money than street vendors.

As much as the US blockade doesn't help Cuba's economy, many people believe that it is used as an excuse for all the economic hardships the Castro regime is facing.

Contrary to Steele's report, a majority of Cubans are now fed up with the political and economic situation and are willing to risk the many negative aspects of capitalism to hopefully improve their lives.
Alain Raoul
Hitachinaka City, Japan

Briefly

OWEN BOWCOTT (October 26) correctly concludes that the key to ending child labour is to get children into school. However, long experience tells us that more needs to be done. Most child labourers work because their parents are poor and because powerful government and business interests are prepared to tolerate or profit from the exploitation of children.

In recent years, mounting international pressure has led to better legislation in many countries, but these laws need to be enforced, and backed up by social and education programmes to get adults into decently paid work and children into school.
Eddy Laurijssen,
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions,
Brussels, Belgium

PACE Andrew Meldrum (October 19), Zanu have been promising to expropriate "white" farmland since 1963. They fought a war for it and they repeat the promise in every election year or whenever they need to drum up support. If they do it now, what will they promise at the next election?
Brian MacGarry,
Harare, Zimbabwe

I SUGGEST that Andrew Biswell read Kafka's Metamorphosis again (October 12). Far from insects losing "whatever charm they may once have had", it is surely Gregor's family that is shown in an unpleasant light. In society's treatment of the misshapen and/or disfigured, we mirror their reaction to his plight. Gregor's situation, however, engenders sympathy rather than horror. Insects come out of Metamorphosis rather well; the slur is on society. Whether it is "irreversible" is up to us.
Tracey Runciman,
Hamburg, Germany

AS ONE who was euphoric at the result of the last general election, I find Gordon Brown and his team's performance in market and news management execrable, and deeply damaging to Britain's economic prospects (October 26). How can he think that trotting out the old mantras — "Must speak to parliament first . . .", ". . . will not be bounced . . ." still cuts any ice? Whom does he think he's fooling? Certainly not the markets.
Adam Thomson,
Brussels, Belgium

COULD Martin Walker be asked to take off his US-tinted glasses now that he is reporting on Europe — or is he the Guardian Weekly's contribution to globalisation?
Jessie Davidson,
Feversham, Ontario, Canada

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Bear-hug ends border dispute

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

CHINA and Russia on this week formally ended territorial disputes dating from the time in the 17th century when the two empires first met, exchanged clumsy insults, and began armed clashes that would continue until the 1960s.

"Chinese and Russian people are together like a bunch of flowers — on one side 1.2 billion Chinese, on the other 100 million Russians," said Boris Yeltsin, making his second visit to Beijing this year.

With a boisterous bear-hug for the cameras in the Great Hall of the People, the Russian president and his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin, displayed a bonhomie, and a disinclination to discuss human rights, that were conspicuously absent from Mr Jiang's recent meeting with Bill Clinton.

Beyond a shared consternation at United States global dominance and a mutually beneficial arms trade, however, relations between Beijing and Moscow rest on shallow foundations. There is little real substance to a frothy rhetoric about a new era of "constructive partnership". Even the centrepiece of Mr Yeltsin's trip — the demarcation of a 4,500km border — fell short of its billing.

A declaration signed in the Great Hall marked an important symbolic end to rivalry that began in the 1640s with a Russian land-grab led by a Siberian fur-trader, Erofei Khabarov. But it is largely a restatement of an earlier 1991 agreement.

It does not reduce the tremendous demographic pressure along a boundary that separates Russia's vast and sparsely populated far-east territory, home to fewer than 10 million, from three Chinese provinces inhabited by more than 100 million.

Ideological soulmates in the 1950s, then bitter foes until Mikhail Gorbachev broke the ice with a visit to Beijing in 1989, Russia and China deny any desire to revive the alliance forged by Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin. But they still seem captive to a tradition of grandiose gestures that characterised both their friendship and subsequent rift.

While trade has flagged, they have spent three years talking up a $12 billion pipeline project that would allow Russia to pump natural gas from Siberia to the Chinese coast. The price-tag is twice the total value of their trade this year — which is expected to fall to $6 billion from $6.8 billion in 1996, despite a pledge last year to increase trade to $20 billion.

The pipeline scheme was again on the agenda on Monday in the form of a framework agreement signed by the Chinese deputy prime minister, Li Lanqing, and Russia's first deputy prime minister, Boris Nemtsov. But it remains unclear who will fund such a project.

While China has become one of the world's most potent trading nations, exporting more than 50 times today what it did 20 years ago, commercial relations with Russia are mired in squabbles. Beijing has bought Sukhoi warplanes and other military equipment but has repeatedly rebuffed invitations to buy commercial aircraft.

Mr Nemtsov, the most reform-minded member of Mr Yeltsin's cabinet, called the level of economic relations "ridiculously low" and accused China of unfair trade barriers against Russian planes, fertiliser and metals. Other officials complain of poor quality Chinese goods.

Another source of friction is China's preference for barter over cash transactions. Chinese traders counter that Russia has no reliable banking system and is riddled with crooks.

But, indignant at Washington's superpower status, neither Beijing nor Moscow wants to drop the public pretence of a booming entente.

China's state-run media, still breathless after extensive, though carefully pruned, coverage of Mr Jiang's tour of the US, hailed the latest Sino-Russian summit, the fifth in as many years, as evidence of China's growing status. Presenting Beijing as the linchpin of the post-cold war order, Xinhua news agency said: "In just 10 days across the Pacific and Eurasia, the two meetings of world leaders have caught the eyes of nearly everyone."

Close encounter . . . Jiang Zemin and Boris Yeltsin embrace before official welcoming ceremonies in Tiananmen Square in Beijing

Comment, page 10

European Convention gives officials freedom to criticise

Martin Walker in Brussels

THE European ombudsman ruled this week that "officials have a fundamental right to freedom of expression" under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Jacob Soederman challenged European Union staff regulations which say that an official "shall not in any manner whatsoever disclose to any unauthorised person any document or information not already made public. He shall continue to be bound by this obligation after leaving the service".

Mr Soederman cited Article 10 of the convention, which defines freedom of expression as "the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and to impart information and ideas without interference by public authority".

The case is not an absolute victory for free expression. But it puts the burden clearly on officialdom to draft new staff regulations and laws which can show, to the satisfaction of the court, that a balance has been struck between a civil servant's duty to be discreet and the individual right to freedom of expression.

Like most of the "open government" precedents that are expected to seep into Britain and other EU member states, the case stemmed from Scandinavia. Shortly after Sweden joined the EU, one of its officials, accustomed to an open system at home, joined the Brussels bureaucracy as deputy director-general.

He gave an interview to the Swedish newspaper Dagens Politik in which he criticised the European Commission's working methods. Rather than bring disciplinary proceedings under the staff regulations, the commissioner for administration, Finland's Erkki Liikanen, sent him a letter reminding him of the "duty of reserve" that the EU imposes on all officials.

When the letter was published, there were formal complaints to the ombudsman from Sweden, claiming that the Swedish constitutional right to free expression was at risk.

Wary of offending Swedish culture, the EU has handled the case with kid gloves. It ducked the procedure of disciplinary action and insisted to the ombudsman that "the staff regulations cannot be interpreted in such a way as to conflict with freedom of expression".

In the landmark case of Vogt versus Germany in 1995, the European Court ruled that, while it is legitimate to impose "a duty of discretion" on civil servants, they remain individuals with full rights of free expression under the human rights convention. The court added that a country had to show that a fair balance had been struck between these two considerations.

Italian police uncover Asian paedophile ring

John Hooper in Rome

ITALIAN authorities claim to have uncovered a paedophile smuggling operation with global reach which they believe is the work of East Asian crime syndicates. Their evidence points for the first time to China as a source of children for the flesh trade.

Pietro Forno, a Milan prosecutor regarded as his country's leading expert on sex offences against minors, said Italian detectives were working with police in 14 countries to smash the ring. "This is the biggest such trade ever discovered in Italy and perhaps in Europe," he told a press conference.

But last week Chinese security officials said that they had no knowledge of the inquiry, and Western diplomats in Beijing expressed surprise. "It is well known that Chinese gangs smuggle illegal immigrants to the United States, but this is the first time I've heard about the smuggling of children for sex," a Beijing-based American crime expert said.

"Operation Game Boy" stretches back to April 2. A police officer at passport control in Linate airport became suspicious of a man and a woman claiming to be Japanese and the apparently terrified girl with them.

A check on their passports showed them to be false. But after admitting that the woman was Chinese, the two adults refused to make any statement. The breakthrough came after a senior policewoman succeeded in winning the confidence of the girl.

She described how she had been bought from her parents in a Chinese village and smuggled to Thailand. There she was put into a paedophile brothel to be "trained". She told police she counted 15 children between the ages of about 10 and 14 passing through the establishment before she was removed to be sold in the US.

Mr Forno said the girl and the two adults were preparing to board a flight to Miami via London when they were detained. Details of the case were kept secret so as not to prejudice the international investigation it sparked, he said.

The Milan prosecutor, who is to seek indictments for the two adults, identified the organisations behind the ring as the Chinese Sie Kie (Snake's Head) and the Japanese Yakuza. Three Japanese had already been arrested by police in Japan as a result of the investigation, he said. Arrest warrants have been issued in Italy for another three people. One is from Papua New Guinea; the other two from the Middle East.

"We have opened the first chapter in a book which has yet to be written, one which deals with the trade in children from East to West," Mr Forno said.

Child prostitution is far less common in China than in Southeast Asia. But a traffic exists in girls — mostly from ethnic minorities — who are shipped across China's southern border into Southeast Asian brothels.

The Week

PRESIDENT Clinton withdrew a plan that would have given him "fast-track" authority over trade deals because it faced certain defeat in Congress. The bill would have restricted Congress to a single yes-or-no decision over trade deals negotiated by the US president.

FIFTEEN elderly women who left Japan with their North Korean husbands between 1959 and 1965 and were unable to see the families they left behind because of the hostility between the two countries have been allowed to visit their homeland.
Washington Post, page 16

IRAN has ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, a new treaty banning the production and possession of nerve-gas weapons.

FIFTY-SIX people were killed and eight injured when a passenger train and a bus were in collision in eastern Cuba, the state news agency AIN said.

MORE than 900 Vietnamese fishermen, feared dead after being caught at sea when Typhoon Linda struck, were rescued by army helicopters and volunteers in boats.

MOST of France's 350,000 barristers staged a one-day strike in support of their demand for an urgent review of the overworked and inefficient French court system.

THE polluted haze that has choked much of Southeast Asia since September has reached Darwin, Australia, carried by northerly winds.

A PAKISTANI man was convicted in the US for a 1993 shooting spree that killed two CIA employees and wounded three other people in an agency building in McLean, Virginia.

THE United Nations said it urgently needed millions of dollars, equipment and skilled personnel to help hundreds of thousands displaced by floods in southern Somalia.

THE unity of Indonesia's first family cracked as President Suharto sided with government ministers being sued by his sons for closing their banks.

IAN GODDARD, who accused the US navy of shooting down TWA flight 800 last year and involved in his campaign a former White House press secretary, Pierre Salinger, has now admitted that it was a hoax.

THREE members of a Belgian documentary film team trapped for a month in Peru's Amazon rainforest say they have found a pre-Inca stone city and chunks of gold ore hidden for centuries under the dense jungle.

UN spy flight calls Saddam's bluff

Julian Borger in Amman, Martin Kettle in Washington and Ian Black in London

THE United Nations called Saddam Hussein's bluff on Monday by sending a United States-piloted U-2 reconnaissance plane over Iraq to resume the search for concealed weapons, ignoring repeated Iraqi threats to shoot the aircraft down. The U-2, flying UN colours, and its US fighter jet escort returned to its Saudi base without incident at midday.

As tension mounted over Baghdad's refusal to tolerate US members of the United Nations Special Commission (Unscom) teams searching for nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, presented the UN in New York with a letter demanding the dilution of American dominance of UN arms inspection teams, the lifting of sanctions and the exemption from inspection of sites related to "national security".

But the five permanent members of the UN Security Council met on Monday night to consider a proposal by the US and Britain to turn the screw still further on Baghdad by imposing travel restrictions on Iraqi officials. The draft resolution would also continue the suspension of regular reviews of UN trade sanctions against Iraq.

There was encouragement for the US and Britain when the Chinese and Russian foreign ministers issued a joint statement demanding "that Iraq immediately resume co-operation with the United Nations".

President Clinton said at the White House that it was "a good thing" that Iraq had not fired on the aircraft.

Although the US threatened "serious consequences" if Iraq does not co-operate with the weapons inspectors, the US state department said that "the first order of business" was for the UN resolution to be passed before any resort to military action. US officials believe that an earlier refusal by the Security Council to adopt new travel restrictions emboldened President Saddam to begin blocking US participation in the weapons inspection programme.

The US defence secretary, William Cohen, said there was "no indication" of any Iraqi attempt to threaten the three-hour flight.

An Iraqi military spokesman said on Baghdad radio that the U-2 had been out of range of anti-aircraft batteries, but added: "Our defences are being prepared to confront the situation." The state-run radio interrupted programmes to relay the announcement, accompanied by the national anthem. Mr Aziz said the U-2 flights were not a proper part of the UN mission.

Other preparations for a possible military confrontation were evident on Monday. Hundreds of Iraqi civilians carrying food, blankets and portraits of President Saddam gathered at the presidential compound in Baghdad, apparently offering themselves as "human shields" against aerial attack.

The Iraqi News Agency described the gathering as spontaneous: "Hundreds of Iraqi families have expressed their readiness . . . in defiance of any American military aggression . . . to sacrifice for their country and leader Saddam Hussein." CNN cameramen were invited to film Iraqi boys volunteering for military service in "Saddam's Commando" units. Schoolchildren and women chanting anti-American slogans also took part in organised demonstrations.

The Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation reported that all military units had been put on maximum alert, leave had been cancelled and commanders told to expect an attack.

Britain kept up the pressure on Iraq, warning President Saddam that he had taken "a step too far" in banning US inspectors. George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, followed Tony Blair and Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, in sending a strong signal of support for Washington.

Mr Robertson said: "I think he [Saddam Hussein] realises now that the world community is united. This was a step too far and Unscom inspectors must be allowed to do their job unhindered by his intransigence."

Ground inspections were halted more than a week ago after Iraqi officials barred US inspectors, accusing them of spying for their government. The UN denied the charge and has withdrawn its teams each time their American members were blocked, arguing that Baghdad had no right to dictate their composition.

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A bus passenger is forcibly given a haircut by a Taliban member in the Afghan capital, Kabul, last week. According to Abdul Rahim dar Khasti, a senior Taliban fighter in the area who heads a barber checkpoint, hair covering the forehead allows the devil to live there and is banned under Islamic law PHOTO: STEFAN SMITH

Nazi slave's win opens way for claims from east

Ian Traynor in Bonn

THOUSANDS of Holocaust survivors in eastern Europe, largely forgotten in the distribution of reparations, received a fillip last week when a Bonn court awarded a Polish Jew back pay for the years she suffered as a slave labourer at Auschwitz.

But it ruled that the 21 other women with whom she brought the test case against the German government six years ago had already been compensated for their suffering. The women, two of whom have since died, were forced to work at a munitions factory in Auschwitz.

The verdict seemed to satisfy the government, which has fiercely resisted the claims, and the German companies that benefited from slave labour during the war, but supporters of the plaintiffs were furious and said they would appeal.

Judge Heinz Sonnenberger called on politicians in Bonn to change the laws governing war reparations.

Rywka Merin, now living in Israel, was awarded DM15,000 ($9,000) in back pay for her two years of forced labour. The cold war had prevented her making a compensation claim before the deadline in 1969, and she later emigrated from Poland to Israel.

The labourers worked long shifts on subsistence rations, without pay. The companies paid the SS 1.23 reichsmarks an hour for each worker. The award was based on estimated wartime wages of 60 reichsmarks a week.

Judge Sonnenberger found that the other women had received pensions and damages under Germany's Federal Compensation Law of 1956. But although the law allows compensation for the suffering or injury caused by being a slave labourer, it does not afford compensation for the simple fact of having been a slave labourer.

Baron Klaus von Münchhausen, the Bremen university lecturer who has been seeking compensation for the 22 women for 13 years, described the ruling as "a provocation" and the sum awarded as a restaurant tip.

Nevertheless, legal experts suggested that thousands of east Europeans who were unable to lodge claims during the cold war could exploit the loophole that got Ms Merin her money.

For years there have been calls in Germany for the government and industry to set up a fund to compensate the survivors of the Nazis' 7 million slave labourers. They were renewed last week but the companies say they had no option but to use the slave labour, and the government has largely ignored the calls.

Informer sues secret service

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

A PALESTINIAN informer who unwittingly delivered a booby-trapped mobile telephone which killed the notorious Hamas bomber "the Engineer" is suing Israel's Shin Bet security service for $25 million compensation.

Kamal Hamad, a contractor from Gaza, claims he is owed the money because of the financial losses the murder of Yahya Ayyash has caused him and the ever present threat to his life.

The law suit, the biggest against the Shin Bet, has been filed in a Tel Aviv court and follows fruitless negotiations between the two sides since Ayyash was blown apart by the rigged phone in January 1996.

If the case reaches the courts, the full story might emerge of how Shin Bet snared Israel's most wanted terrorist, who masterminded suicide bombings that killed 67 civilians and wounded more than 300. It has been widely reported that Mr Hamad did not know the telephone held explosives.

Ayyash, a former chemistry student and Hamas commander aged 30 when he died, eluded Israeli patrols for a year after posing as a Jewish settler to explain his presence on Israeli territory while fleeing from Nablus in the West Bank to Gaza. But the Israelis tracked him to the home of Mr Hamad's nephew, Osama, in Beit Lahiya.

Algeria 'behind Paris bombs'

Continued from page 1

violence has escalated to make Algeria the most dangerous country in the world.

The carnage in Algeria and the bombs in France have been blamed on a group of Muslim fanatics, the Armed Islamic Group, or GIA. Joseph said: "The GIA is a pure product of Smain's secret service." His testimony is supported by a former diplomat, Mohammed Larbi Zitout, No 2 at the Algerian embassy in Libya until he defected to Britain.

"I used to read all the secret telexes," Joseph said. "I know that the GIA has been infiltrated and manipulated by the government. The GIA has been completely turned by the government."

Joseph said secret agents who flew in from Algeria, sent by Smain, organised "at least" two of the bombs in Paris in the summer of 1995, in which several people were killed. The operation was run by Colonel Souames Mahmoud, alias Habib, head of the secret service at the Algerian embassy in Paris.

Two men were later seized by French police. One, Khaled Kelkal, was shot in cold blood, his killing caught on camera. The second, Karim Moussa, was captured, injured. He has since disappeared and the French authorities have failed to explain what happened to this most-wanted suspect.

Joseph said Tewfik and Smain spent some of Algeria's oil and gas billions to bribe politicians and security officials in Europe. Joseph said: "I personally delivered a suitcase containing 500,000 francs to one French MP with strong links to the French intelligence services." The MP, who lost his seat at the last election, is a noted apologist for the Algerian and Iraqi regimes.

The power of the sécurité militaire is such that it murdered a president, Joseph said. President Mohammed Boudiaf was assassinated in June 1992 by people within *le pouvoir*. He knows because two of the killers were associates in the sécurité militaire.

"Boudiaf was killed because he had very sensitive files on corrupt generals. The generals have made millions from corruption, held in Swiss banks. Boudiaf started an inquiry."

Fatiha Boudiaf, the president's widow, said last week: "Boudiaf knew that he would be killed by those who brought him to power" — a coded reference to the secret police.

Joseph said the massacres, in which tens of thousands of Algerians have been killed since the civil war started in 1992, have been carried out by the regime's death squads. "Le pouvoir are behind the massacres and other killings besides. It's to maintain the state of fear," he said.

"In 1992 Smain created a special group, L'Escadron de la Mort [the Squadron of Death]. One of its main missions to begin with was to kill officers, colonels. The death squads organise the massacres. If anyone inside the killing machine hesitates to torture or kill, they are automatically killed . . . The FIS aren't doing the massacres. All the intelligence services in Europe know the government is doing it, but they are keeping quiet because they want to protect their supplies of oil."

Joseph said he had witnessed torture. "I have seen the blowtorch used in Châteauneuf. The smell is awful. . . . It has a very special smell of burning hair and flesh."

But the blowtorch was not the worst. "I have seen in Antar, a torture centre near Algiers zoo, a human eye on a table with a fork in it . . . I have terrible nightmares."

He described electrode torture he had seen. "They manacle a person to a bed, no mattress, just the springs. Then they get a live electric wire and touch the person — he made a swishing movement, his right hand coming down in a lash."

"Smain used to go to the torture zoo and my colleagues would say: 'The Boss is here. He is working.' That meant he was supervising the torture himself." — *The Observer*

Oil poured on troubled Caspian waters

Tom Whitehouse in Baku

SINCE Azerbaijan won independence from the Soviet Union, Western nations have vied with each other to gain access to the oil riches of the Caspian Sea.

A thousand Britons work in Azerbaijan's oil industry. "We're doing very nicely," said one British businessman. "The Caspian is similar to the North Sea, so our engineers know what they're talking about."

But the largest share of the latest big oil deals has gone to United States multinationals. Smaller stakes granted to European, Japanese, Russian and Middle Eastern firms mean that President Heydar Aliyev has substantial international political clout. His objectives are to bolster Azerbaijan's independence and regain territories lost to Armenia in the war that ended in 1994.

"The involvement of the world's leading powers will provide stability . . . because nobody will want to destroy their profits," Vafa Gulizade, the president's foreign affairs adviser, said. "We are ready to share our oil wealth with Armenia but they must withdraw from our lands."

Only Israel gets more per-capita aid from the US than Armenia, so the settlement of the war now depends to a great extent on a battle between the US oil and Armenian lobbies.

Last month, in a volte-face of his previous policy, President Levon Ter-Petrosian of Armenia said Nagorno-Karabakh — the disputed enclave inside Azerbaijan over which the two countries went to war — could achieve neither union with Armenia nor full independence.

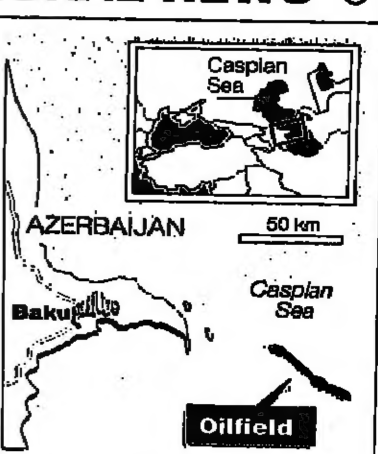
The Americans in Baku's Tex-Mex bars and steak houses do not want regional disputes blocking pipeline routes to Western markets.

The US state department believes a formal peace deal could be signed this year, in which Armenia withdraws from all Azeri territory apart from Nagorno-Karabakh, the status of which within Azerbaijan will then be determined by international mediation.

But amid all the oil hullabaloo and geopolitical manoeuvring there is a lurking fear that Azerbaijan is neglecting its internal problems. One in seven Azeris is a refugee from territories occupied by Armenia, and they are not the only ones in poverty. On the main road out of Baku, ordinary Azeris offer clothes, beds and ovens for sale.

"They are selling their homes to get money for food," said an aid worker. Some in the international business community complain about government corruption of "Nigerian dimensions", which is preventing redistribution of the oil wealth.

"A weak legal structure and a relaxed attitude towards corruption is a recipe for disaster," said Tevfik Yaprak, the representative in Baku for the World Bank, whose loans are conditional on reforms.



Russia holds key to conflict in Georgia

THE smart new boutiques and wine bars on Rustaveli Avenue in the Georgian capital Tbilisi seem out of place beside the bullet-scarred and bombed-out buildings, *writes Tom Whitehouse in Tbilisi.*

Since the former Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, came home from retirement in Moscow to become parliamentary leader and then president, Georgia has begun a slow process of economic recovery. But the legacy of civil war is everywhere to be seen.

Refugees from Abkhazia — the northwest region that established an independent state after fighting with Georgian forces in 1992-93 — still languish in Tbilisi's main central hotel with little prospect of returning home soon.

Mr Shevardnadze believes economic self-interest will eventually force the mainly Muslim Abkhaz to accept status within Georgia. "Otherwise there will always be this continuous threat that the conflict will be resumed," he said.

There is more than political bluster in such a view. Abkhazia is steadily becoming poorer as a result of a trade blockade and its population of 500,000 is slowly leaving. But because of Georgia's new role as a transit country for oil from the Caspian Sea, it has prospects for sustained economic growth and enhanced military power.

"Georgia's Black Sea port of Poti will be the end of the 21st century's Silk Road," said a diplomat. "If the Abkhaz want to be a part of that, they have to come to an agreement."

But by raising the stakes in Georgia's internal conflicts, oil could also prove a destabilising factor. Russia, too, wants new Caspian oil to run across its territory. Stirring up trouble in Abkhazia is one way for Moscow to promote its cause. "There are forces in Russia which think that way, but I wouldn't count President Yeltsin among them," said Mr Shevardnadze.

Some saw the hand of the Russian security services in an attempt on the president's life two years ago. Russia was also accused of giving Abkhazia military support. Mr Shevardnadze is now hoping for a more enlightened foreign policy from the Kremlin. "If Russia wants to have more influence on Georgia then it should do more to resolve the Abkhaz conflict," he said, "because stability in Georgia would also mean stability in the southern flanks of Russia."



Truck stop . . . lorry drivers help a colleague during the removal of a blockade

France trades blows with partners



Europe this week

Martin Walker

IT WAS ironic that in a week when France's leaders were meeting both Germany's Helmut Kohl and Britain's Tony Blair, they should have chosen to upset what was starting to look like the neatly ordered apple cart of monetary union. And it was bad luck that made France's cheeky attempt to win the chairmanship of the new European Central Bank coincide with the French truckers' strike, which brought much of Europe's trade to a standstill before last week's compromise deal.

The coincidence of the two crises meant that the weakness of the European project, and its vulnerability to the actions of a single member state, had seldom been more exposed. By re-opening the virtually settled question of who is to run the central bank, Paris has managed to irritate Europe's governing and financial élites. And by blocking France's roads and frontiers, the truckers managed to infuriate small businesses and exporting companies, along with the hauliers, all over Europe.

This is because France is the hub of Europe's road transport. Bordering six other countries, the French *autoroutes* are the crucial arteries of European trade, which is worth $1,200 billion a year. Every day of the truckers' strike therefore jeopardised some $3 billion of trade.

The strike also put at risk the livelihoods of drivers from other countries. So the most dramatic confrontation on French roads last week was not the French police trying to clear the lorry blockades but a kind of truckers' civil war.

The French truckers had a strong case. They are overworked and underpaid, and the deal they thought they had won in their similar two-week strike last year (which helped bring down the conservative government) has not been honoured. But their argument is with the French haulage companies, not Europe. So their strike exploded into a European financial and political crisis when Britain, Spain and Germany demanded action to clear the roads, and the European Commission in Brussels threatened legal action against Paris to enforce the single market's freedom to trade.

Although the truckers had allowed some Spanish trucks to get through the Pyrenees and some German lorries to cross the "Bridge of Europe" at Strasbourg, the closure of the Channel at Calais held firm, provoking outrage in usually pro-European Ireland, which claimed that more than 1,000 Irish trucks were blocked.

Legal action by the European Commission against a member state is a rare and controversial measure, and would require the endorsement of all its 20 members. This would be most unlikely. Last year, the European Union backed off from a similar strike, saying it was "an internal matter".

This time again, despite the threats of the EU transport commissioner, Neil Kinnock, who was summoned by an angry European Parliament to explain what Europe could or should do, the Commission appeared to shrug its shoulders and hope for the best. It has no real powers to enforce free transit in the single market. Except in particular cases, such as competition rules, it has very few powers to enforce anything at all, even when it has the parliament's backing.

The real power in the EU lies in the Council of Ministers, the body where the 15 national governments meet. Few and limited are the issues where majority voting in this Council can carry the day. Although France (in Charles de Gaulle's day) and Britain (under the governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major) are notorious for their use of the national veto, it was Kohl who stunned the Amsterdam treaty meeting by refusing extensions of majority voting in environmental and cultural matters.

Now France, Britain and Germany are locked in a new row over the European Central Bank, which will run the entire EU's monetary policies once the single currency is launched. Kohl had promised Blair that he would reserve a seat for Britain on the bank's board, to be taken up once Britain joined the euro. The French have objected.

Then the French claimed that there had been a secret understanding that if the new central bank was located in Germany, a Frenchman would be appointed to run it. The Germans say there was no such deal, and that they have long backed Wim Duisenberg, from the Netherlands, to chair the bank. But France, in an unprecedented joint statement from the (conservative) President Jacques Chirac and the (Socialist) prime minister, Lionel Jospin, has proposed its own central banker, Jean-Claude Trichet, for the top job.

This has infuriated the Dutch, dismayed the Germans, and provoked the Italians to suggest appointing one of their bankers, or even the reliable head of the Bundesbank, Hans Tietmeyer. The idea of a German central banker running the EU central bank from Germany will not go down well in Paris. It has given comfort only to the Eurosceptics, in Germany as well as in Britain's Conservative party, who say it just goes to show what a shambles this European idea really is. Of course, had there been no fuss, the Tories would have said it all went to show that the usual secret Franco-German stitch-up was running Europe — as an anti-British conspiracy.

Perhaps one should look on the bright side. The vulnerability of Europe to the French truckers shows just how well the single market is working, and how integrated trade and manufacturing is becoming. Moreover, Kinnock's department in the Commission should now be able to speed up the introduction of tamper-proof tachographs in truck cabs, and take other measures to resolve the underlying problems of the industry, and avoid another truckers' strike. And the problem of who runs the bank will simply have to be haggled over in the usual way. Whoever runs it will in any case be bound by strict rules of anti-inflationary orthodoxy.

Republican wins send grim message to Clinton



Washington diary

Martin Kettle

IT IS A little known fact, but the United States does not merely have mid-term elections half-way through the four-year presidential cycle. It also has mid-mid-term elections in the year in between a presidential contest and the official mid-terms. And this is the month for these "off-year" contests.

For the people of New Jersey and Virginia, who have just chosen their new governors, the contests were anything but off-year. Likewise for the inhabitants of more than 200 US cities, of which New York is the most important, who have just elected their mayors. But for the American political class — and in particular for President Bill Clinton — what was important about the voting on November 4 was not so much the identities of the new occupants of the various governors' and mayors' mansions, but what it said about the prospects for the real mid-terms next year.

For the 1998 elections are Clinton's last chance. Between 1992, when he was first elected president, and the 1994 mid-terms, Clinton ruled with the support of a Democratic majority in Congress. Then, in 1994, Newt Gingrich led his Republicans to victory in a catastrophic night of rejection for the Clinton record. By 1996, Clinton had recovered enough support to win a second presidential term with some ease, but he pulled too few Democrats back to Congress on his coat-tails to dislodge Gingrich's party.

For four of his first six years in the White House, therefore, Clinton will have governed with a hostile Congress. His only chance of changing that alignment of political forces will be for the Democrats to regain control in 1998, thus allowing him two final years in which he can at last stretch his wings and promote the Democratic agenda that remains — one assumes, somewhat against the evidence — close to his heart.

The 1997 elections were therefore important partly in their own right but also as a guide to the mood of the nation in the run-in to the more significant contests next year. And in neither case did they offer the president a cheery message.

This was, as one Democrat spin-doctor put it when the votes were finally counted, "a status quo election". In the great majority of contests last week, incumbents were re-elected or new candidates succeeded retirees from their own party. In the elections for governorships, Christine Todd Whitman held on narrowly in New Jersey, while Jim Gilmore was elected to succeed his colleague George Allen in Virginia. In the one congressional seat contested, in the New York borough of Staten Island, Vito Fossella inherited Susan Molinari's majority. And in the most prominent of the many mayoral contests, New York's Rudolph Giuliani easily won a second term.

Clinton's problem with these results is obvious. All the four victors mentioned are Republicans. OK, so they were mostly predictable wins. No one really expected the combative and remarkable Giuliani to lose this year. Anything other than a Gilmore victory in Virginia would have been a major upset. And Fossella was returned in a congressional district that has been in his party's hands for 17 years. But all three won very comfortably — and much too comfortably for the White House's taste.

Yet New Jersey was the contest that really mattered. Often a closely contested state, New Jersey voted for Clinton over Bob Dole a year ago by no less than an 18-point margin, and it elected a second Democratic senator that day too. With the liberal Republican Whitman already in trouble with her own party over abortion, a rightwing Libertarian party candidate siphoning off 5 per cent of her vote, and a Democratic campaign focused on the vote-winning issue of reducing car insurance, Whitman ought to have lost this time. Instead, she came home by a one-point margin.

Status quo election it may have been, but it is important to understand the implications of that judgment. The New York Republican congressman Bill Paxon got that answer right when he said that "the status quo is fine for us in 1998. We already have the majority of the governors, the majority of the Senate and the majority of the House."

In spite of Clinton's continuing personal popularity — or at least his continuing good ratings — there is not a sufficient tide running in the Democrats' favour at the moment to enable his party to recapture Congress next year.

From where we are now, the probability must be that the Clinton presidency will continue to be hemmed in by its own legislative impotence, and that the president will leave office with little sense of legislative or political momentum to pass to his party's nominee in 2000.

Unless, of course, he can fashion a change in the mood. But that — unless Saddam Hussein rides to his rescue — now seems improbable. When Clinton examined the results in the White House last week, it is a fair bet that his principal conclusion will have been that the Republicans won because they outspent the Democrats in political advertising.

There is a certain desperation in this mood. Clinton is preoccupied with the fear that he and his party are being gradually spent into political defeat. Listening to the celebrated White House fund-raising videos that were subpoenaed by the Senate inquiry, one repeatedly hears Clinton saying that his re-election campaign needs the donors' money so that it can afford to pay for the ads that are the key to shifting the poll numbers.

One does not need a secret tape recorder to know that he will be repeating the very same message with even greater urgency over the coming months as he strives to rescue his presidency's last chance.

Brown tells British business to embrace euro

Celia Weston and Larry Elliott

THE Government this week gave its most enthusiastic support yet for Britain's membership of a single European currency when the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, announced measures to make British businesses the trail-blazers for monetary union.

Although Britain will not be in the first wave of the single currency, Mr Brown wants British companies to join their competitors on the continent in using the euro from its January 1999 launch date. He told the Confederation of British Industry conference in Birmingham that he expected companies to take advantage of arrangements being put in place by the Treasury to allow them to pay taxes, issue shares and file accounts in euros from 1999.

Since the Government decided two weeks ago to support monetary union in principle, ministers have moved quickly to consolidate the political advantage over the divided Opposition.

The Chancellor's commitment to promoting monetary union was backed by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who in a speech to a City of London audience said of the euro: "We want it to be a success. In due course, when the economic circumstances permit, we want Britain to be part of that success and we want business and the City to start active preparations now."

Setting out five foreign policy priorities, Mr Blair said Britain needed to be strong in Europe "not because of the terrible defeatist argument that we have no alternative, but because we have a huge and positive role to play.

"Working wholeheartedly with our partners enables us to promote our interests more effectively. Past shouting from the sidelines got us nowhere. The others simply get on with the game without us."

Without naming the Conservatives, he said: "Splendid isolation is no kind of policy for the 21st century. It is my belief that far from standing alone, Britain can be the pivot of this new world."

Conservative hostility to economic and monetary union was spelled out again on Monday by the party leader, William Hague, who told the CBI: "The truth is that the supporters of British membership of a single currency tend to fall back on one central argument that overshadows all others. They say it is going to happen and that we can't possibly be left out of it. It is the argument used by every lemming throughout the centuries."

His warning was warmly received, but Labour's closeness to the CBI leadership on monetary union was reinforced by Adair Turner, director-general of the employers' organisation. Mr Turner welcomed Mr Brown's pledge to "prepare and decide", adding that industry was pleasantly surprised at the speed with which Labour was putting in place preparations for monetary union.

"Companies which are involved in international trade with Europe will have to be dealing in the euro," he said. "The euro in Europe is likely to have a pervasive effect, over time, on public opinion in the UK. As long as the euro is successful it will push public opinion in favour rather than against."

Blair returns cash in tobacco ad row

Guardian Reporters

LABOUR this week tried to halt a damaging "cash for influence" row over its U-turns on tobacco advertising by deciding to return a donation of more than £5,000 from Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone, on the advice of Sir Patrick Neill, the public standards watchdog.

The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, knew of the donation when he met Mr Ecclestone at Downing Street three weeks ago to talk about the tobacco ban on Formula One sponsorship. "No request was made regarding policy," a party spokesman insisted.

Speculation was growing that Mr Ecclestone's donation to Labour may have been well in excess of the £5,000 minimum which the party declares annually under its own rules. The party refused to comment on the amount, but strongly denied reports that it was as high as £1.5 million.

Mr Ecclestone confirmed that he had made a donation, but added: "I have never sought any favour from New Labour or any member of the Government, nor has any been given."

The Liberal Democrats said the affair underlined the need for the inquiry into party funding. Charles Kennedy said: "The last government was dogged by allegations of sleaze. If the House of Commons is to recover its reputation, it is essential that such allegations are not allowed to accumulate again."

As the row continued over the Government's U-turn on banning tobacco sponsorship, party sources revealed that it was only after the decision was made to exempt Formula One from the ban that Mr Blair and Labour's general secretary, Tom Sawyer, decided to refer the matter to Sir Patrick, chairman of the Commission of Standards in Public Life, who is charged with investigating party funding.

Sir Patrick said: "I make no criticism of the party for originally receiving a donation from Mr Ecclestone, but in the light of the changed circumstances I stressed the importance of those in public life being judged not only by the reality but also by the appearance."

The disclosures come a week after the U-turn emerged and set in train the kind of sleaze attack on Labour which so damaged the Conservatives in their last term.

Before the general election in May, Labour made an unequivocal promise to ban tobacco advertising in sport in accordance with a European Commission directive, compiled over the past seven years, and due to be agreed in December.

But last week the Health Minister, Tessa Jowell, wrote to the EC asking for motor racing to be exempted from the ban. She argued that the ban would be counter-productive, forcing the sport into Eastern Europe and Asia, from which tobacco-sponsored programmes would still be beamed into Europe. Her action enraged anti-smoking campaigners. The chairman of the British Medical Association, Sandy Macara, said: "Clearly an unholy alliance of the tobacco manufacturers and the Formula One organisers has put the Government in an impossible position."

Controversy deepened when it emerged that Ms Jowell's husband had links with a top motor racing team. John Maples, the shadow health secretary, asked Sir Robin Butler, head of the Civil Service, to investigate whether Ms Jowell's involvement amounted to a conflict of interest. She described the suggestions of impropriety as "offensive".

Last Sunday, Downing Street moved to distance Mr Blair from accusations of "cash for influence" by emphasising that Labour's intention remains a total ban on tobacco sponsorship of sporting events and that the exemption for Formula One should only stand for 10 years to allow the industry to find other sponsors.

"One thing we've failed to get across in the last few days is that the policy's unchanged: it depends how we get there," a government official said. "It may be that we give more time to Formula One to wean itself off tobacco. The industry is saying it will actively seek other sponsors."

The final outcome depends on negotiations over the EC directive. Whitehall's formal position is to seek exemption for Formula One, in return for which the industry will be told to seek other funding and lower the visibility of advertisements on its cars.

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Ritual gets a dressing down

FIRST Gordon Brown spurns white tie and wears a "man of the people" lounge suit to the Lord Mayor's dinner, *writes Clare Dyer*. Now Lord Irvine of Lairg, pictured above right with Lord Bingham, wants to dump centuries of history and consign his full-bottomed wig, buckled shoes and black silk tights to the dressing-up box.

New Labour doesn't like dressing up. The tricorn hat and wig are at odds with its modern, thrusting image. And the Lord Chancellor, not known for his patience, is fed up with the daily ritual of dressing up in his uniform.

As speaker of the House of Lords, he cuts a curious figure on the Woolsack, kitted out in 17th century gear, surrounded by elderly gents in tweeds or pin-stripes and ladies in jersey two-pieces. He aims to follow the example of Betty Boothroyd, who decided in 1992, when she became Speaker of the Commons, to dispense with the wig worn for centuries by her predecessors, and just wear a black robe.

Lord Irvine wants to look more like a continental or US judge, sober rather than striking. Though he has no plans to order the judges to follow his example, he believes judicial wigs project an image which is "old-fashioned, out-of-touch and self-satisfied".

But he is no Roundhead. He will retain the outfit worn by the Lord Chancellor on ceremonial occasions. The gold robe, black jacket with lace white cuffs, frilly jabot, white gloves, and black gold buckled shoes will stay in the wardrobe.

The items he wants to ditch were all newly acquired six months ago when he took office. A spokesman pointed out that he could not make do with hand-me-downs from his predecessor, Lord Mackay, because the two men are "not the same shape".

In Brief

AN Anglo-French summit at Canary Wharf in London ended with promises that the two countries would work together to restructure their defence and aerospace industries in order to compete with American giants. The summit was attended by the French president, Jacques Chirac, prime ministers Lionel Jospin and Tony Blair, and other senior members of both governments. It ended on an upbeat note with President Chirac endorsing Britain's stand on monetary union.

THE Government is to clarify the rights of parents to discipline their children after the European Commission ruled that a boy's severe caning breached his human rights. Ministers will tighten the law, but said they would not impose a complete ban on smacking.

RICHARD TOMLINSON, the former MI6 agent charged with breaking the Official Secrets Act by passing secret information to an Australian publisher, was remanded in custody. The Attorney General has not yet given his consent to prosecution.

THE two boys who murdered the toddler Jamie Bulger were offered fresh hope of an early release after the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, announced their sentences would be reviewed by ministers at the halfway stage. The House of Lords ruled that Mr Straw's predecessor, Michael Howard, was wrong to raise the boys' sentences to 15 years.

THE Royal Opera House was saved from imminent insolvency after it took £11 million from a trust fund intended for redevelopment and received another £4 million from an anonymous donor.

AIRLINES and travel agents will no longer be able to advertise air fares without including taxes, after complaints that compulsory charges can add as much as 50 per cent to the price. The new rules will come into effect in January.

THE Home Secretary, Jack Straw, pledged to review the rights of alleged sex attackers to question their victims in court after a rapist cross-examined two women he attacked at knife-point and repeatedly forced them to relieve their torment.

SIX Iraqis opposed to Saddam Hussein's regime who hijacked an airliner and forced it to land at Stansted airport were jailed for between five and nine years. The judge passed the lenient sentences following a plea for compassion by jurors in the light of the treatment the men had suffered in their home country.

SIR Isaiah Berlin, the most honoured and deeply admired intellectual of his time, has died at the age of 88.

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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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The Week in Britain James Lewis

Bishop urges lowering of gay age of consent to 16

THE BISHOP of Oxford, the Rt Rev Richard Harries, plunged the Church of England into a new crisis over homosexuality when he called for the gay age of consent to be lowered from 18 to 16. He was the first bishop to do so publicly, though others are thought to support him privately.

When Parliament last discussed the question in 1994, most of the bishops in the House of Lords, including Bishop Harries, voted for an age of consent of 21 or 18. He has now changed his mind.

Citing evidence from the European Court and the British Medical Association, he said it appeared that people's sexuality was well formed by the age of 16. "Prosecuting people of 17 for having sex is really very unproductive," he said.

Gay Christian activists were encouraged. They argue that the Church should be playing a leading role in pressing for an end to the discrimination and marginalisation suffered by homosexuals, both in society and in the Church, which bars clergy from having same-sex relationships.

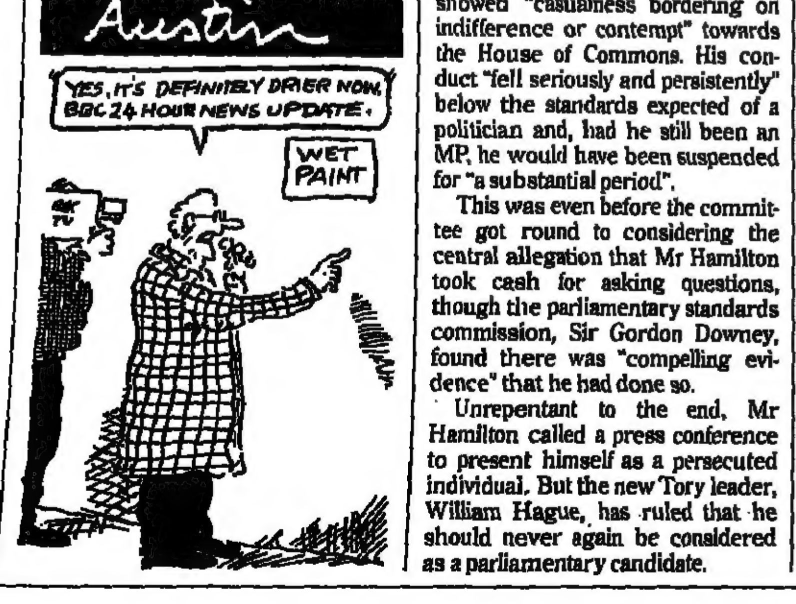
But Bishop Harries seemed certain to infuriate evangelical groups that are intensifying their campaign to block any further recognition for homosexuality within the Church. They warn the issue will become even more divisive than that of women priests, which remains a cause of bitterness in many dioceses.

A lower age of consent is expected to be proposed in the House of Commons as an amendment to the Crime and Disorder Bill to be introduced in the next few weeks. The Government is to allow a free vote, and the proposal will probably be approved there. However, it may fare less well in the House of Lords, where support from the bench of bishops could be of crucial importance.

BBC TELEVISION launched a 24-hour news channel which will cost licence-payers £30 million but is accessible only to about 2 million cable subscribers. For other viewers, News 24 can be seen on BBC1 only between the end of normal transmissions and the start of breakfast programmes.

It was the corporation's first new channel since the birth of BBC2, 33 years ago. But critics complained that there was no demand for it and that its cost had been found by starving other news programmes of resources. Flagship news programmes on BBC1 have regular audiences of around 6 million.

News 24 could in time be a formidable force. Belonging to the world's largest news-gathering team, it can call upon 250 correspondents worldwide — 100 more than its main rival, CNN. But BBC staff are complaining about being asked to work longer hours and more weekends without extra pay, and there is even talk of industrial action.



NEARLY 45 years after his execution, the case of Derek Bentley has been referred back to the Court of Appeal by the Criminal Cases Review Commission set up by John Major's government to re-examine disputed convictions.

Bentley, then 19, was hanged for the murder of a policeman during a warehouse robbery in Croydon, south London, in 1952, even though he was under arrest at the time of the killing. The fatal shot was fired by his friend, Christopher Craig; but he, at 16, was too young to hang. Bentley, who had a mental age of 11, was convicted on the grounds that he had taken part in a joint enterprise.

IN THE first byelection of the new Parliament, Labour held Paisley South, but with a greatly reduced majority. The vacancy was caused by the suicide of the Labour MP, Gordon McMaster. Friends claimed that enemies in the party had been spreading unfounded rumours about McMaster's private life. Subsequent claims of misconduct in the Paisley Labour party led to the suspension of Tommy Graham, MP for the neighbouring Renfrewshire West constituency.

A low turnout of less than 43 per suggested that voters in this Labour heartland were disillusioned by the sleaze allegations. The winner, Douglas Alexander, a 29-year-old solicitor with impeccable Blairite credentials, had a majority of 2,731 — 10,019 less than that of his predecessor.

THE NEIL HAMILTON affair finally came to an end when the Standards and Privileges Committee unanimously found that the former MP had behaved in a way that showed "casualness bordering on indifference or contempt" towards the House of Commons. His conduct "fell seriously and persistently" below the standards expected of a politician and, had he still been an MP, he would have been suspended for "a substantial period".

This was even before the committee got round to considering the central allegation that Mr Hamilton took cash for asking questions, though the parliamentary standards commission, Sir Gordon Downey, found there was "compelling evidence" that he had done so.

Unrepentant to the end, Mr Hamilton called a press conference to present himself as a persecuted individual. But the new Tory leader, William Hague, has ruled that he should never again be considered as a parliamentary candidate.

Limited ban on animal tests

Christopher Elliott

ANIMALS will no longer be used to test cosmetic products, the Government announced last week.

The three companies holding four licences for such experiments have agreed to give them up after approaches by the Home Office.

The move affects only 252 animal experiments a year — and does not include a ban on testing cosmetic ingredients — but animal welfare campaigners welcomed it as a significant first step to a much wider proscription of tests on live animals.

"It's brilliant, absolutely brilliant," said Penny Hawkins of the RSPCA. "It's a drop in the ocean as far as the numbers involved in animal testing, but it proves it can be done — there are alternatives — and sets a good example for the rest of Europe."

The all-party parliamentary Animal Welfare Group also welcomed the move, which affects experiments on 220 rats, guinea pigs and rabbits to test toxicity, irritation to the skin and eyes, irritability and absorption. The animals involved are then destroyed.

There are a further 2,400 experiments involving tests using cosmetic ingredients.

A Home Office minister, Lord Williams, said the Government was conducting a wider review of tests on animals, which last year involved 2.7 million experiments in Britain.

He added: "The wider moral question is 'are experiments on animals justified in any circumstances?' I think they are, but . . . only in justifiable circumstances and with due reference to the fact we are using living creatures."

Lord Williams met the Commons animal procedures committee to discuss a ban on safety testing on animals of ingredients primarily intended for cosmetic products; a ban on the use of great apes — which have not been used in Britain since 1986; and a ban on the use of animals for alcohol and tobacco testing, although there are now no licences in existence.

The move comes two weeks after the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, ruled out a government ban, sparking criticism that he was not carrying out manifesto pledges.

Lord Williams did appear to rule out a royal commission on animal testing, which was promised at the election. He said it would cost £25 million and take at least two years to report, and the cash would be better spent looking for alternatives to testing on animals.

Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop and a leading campaigner against animal testing, said the move put Britain at the forefront of Europe over animal testing. "At last we can celebrate a great first step after 21 years of campaigning," she said. "The next step is to lead the European Union in taking similar action."



Amateur diver Ron Howell shows some of the hundreds of Islamic gold coins, ingots and pieces of Moroccan jewellery he helped recover from the site of a 17th century shipwreck in Salcombe Bay, off the coast of Devon. The find has been hailed by experts from the British Museum as of national importance PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Witness payments to end

Kamal Ahmed

THE GOVERNMENT is to ban payments to witnesses by newspapers seeking to buy up people involved in prominent cases such as the trial of Rosemary West.

In a significant tightening of legal controls over the press, Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor, will introduce a draft bill that will propose making payments to witnesses illegal and will strictly control the amount of publicity that can be given to a case before a trial begins.

In a letter to Gerald Kaufman, chairman of the House of Commons media select committee, Lord Irvine said he agreed with a committee report this year which said that self regulation did not offer sufficient control.

Publication of the letter came two days after Lord Irvine caused a storm of media protest when he said the interpretation of privacy controls contained in European legislation would be left to judges rather than to Parliament.

The Lord Chancellor said introduction of the Human Rights Bill, which makes the European Convention on Human Rights legally binding in Britain, laid down that everybody was entitled to privacy and that public figures could go to court to protect themselves and their families.

"Press freedoms will be in safe hands with our British judges," he said.

Witness payments became an issue after West was sentenced to 10 life sentences in 1995. Up to 19 witnesses were said to have received payments for telling their stories to newspapers. Concerns were raised that witnesses might be encouraged to embellish their stories in court to ensure guilty verdicts.

Short vows to target poverty

Ian Black

BRITAIN'S aid programme is to be re-directed towards the elimination of world poverty within [illegible] years, the International Development Secretary, Clare Short, promised last week as she unveiled the first white paper on aid for 20 years.

Ms Short, talking of a "moral duty" to help the poor, was praised for the long-heralded abolition of the controversial "aid and trade" provision, which subsidised British firms bidding for big projects in the developing world. But tied aid credits, helping British firms compete abroad, are to continue.

Ms Short promised that the Government would reverse the decline in Britain's £2.3 billion aid budget and move toward the United Nations target of spending 0.7 per cent of national wealth — or about £4.9 billion — on aid, though she conspicuously gave no timetable.

The white paper, a Labour manifesto pledge, anchors itself in the Government's wider approach to "Britain's unique role in the world".

It says: "Our particular history places us on the fulcrum of global influence. Helping to lead the world in a commitment to poverty elimination and sustainable development is an international role in which all the people of Britain could take pride."

It calls for a coherent approach — across environment, trade, debt, investment and agricultural policy — while arguing for human rights, accountable government and observance of basic labour standards. Excessive military spending by developing countries is to be discouraged.

Some believe the Government has failed to go far enough. Simon Maxwell, of the Overseas Development Institute, said: "The aid lobby will be disappointed that there is no new money. We're not going to carry conviction internationally if we're stuck in 15th place out of 21 aid donors."

Harriet Lamb, of the World Development Movement, said: "We give this white paper one out of 10. We need an aid programme where the money goes towards relieving poverty, not supporting British business."

Adams 'sorry' for Enniskillen

THE Prime Minister, Tony Blair, sent a wreath to the cenotaph at Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, for the Remembrance Sunday memorial on the 10th anniversary of an IRA bomb explosion which left 11 people dead and 60 injured.

This year's remembrance services were notable for pioneering moves towards reconciliation. Last week the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, for the first time said "sorry" for the bombing. And in Belfast a nationalist lord mayor for the first time wore a poppy and laid a wreath.

In Coventry, British veterans in the Far East Prisoners of War Association stood beside Japan's ambassador to Britain as he laid a wreath. The gesture of forgiveness followed a service which was broadcast to the Japanese city of Hiroshima, where America dropped the first atom bomb. PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL McERLANE

Republican unity shattered over peace talks

John Mullin

HARDLINE republican activists this week appealed to Sinn Fein and IRA dissidents to join them in opposing the Northern Ireland peace process and the decommissioning of terrorist weapons.

Republican Sinn Fein, linked to the Continuity IRA (CIRA), which rejects the current IRA ceasefire, labelled Sinn Fein leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness "collaborators" over their role at the multi-party talks on Northern Ireland's future.

Ruairi O Bradaigh, president of Republic Sinn Fein, which split from Sinn Fein in 1986, said at his party's annual conference in Dublin that its membership was mushrooming. It is opposed to any deal short of a united Ireland, believing anything less would strengthen partition.

Security sources on both sides of the border view an increase in Republican Sinn Fein membership with alarm.

CIRA has been behind several recent attacks, including a 400lb van bomb in the Unionist village of Markethill in Co Armagh two months ago. It used Semtex, previously found only in IRA devices, in a failed bombing in Londonderry.

Sinn Fein was hit by the resignation of 12 members in Co Louth last week over the Mitchell principles of peace and democracy.

Sinn Fein had to sign up to the six principles, named after George Mitchell, the former United States senator chairing the Stormont talks, to win its place at the negotiating table on Northern Ireland's future. But within two days of that decision in September, the IRA indicated its unhappiness with them.

The resignation of the Louth members, well-respected in the republican movement, represents the biggest crisis in Sinn Fein since the split 11 years ago. They felt the leadership had "steamrollered" through the Mitchell principles.

The IRA also had to cope with up to 20 resignations over Sinn Fein's peace strategy. It could have been more, but the IRA leadership organised an emergency army convention last month in Donegal in such a way as to limit expressions of disaffection.

David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, said the defections were part of a choreographed Sinn Fein withdrawal from the peace process and a resumption of IRA violence. Security sources see the disaffection as real.

None of those who have quit the IRA has yet defected to CIRA, but the there were further reports on Sunday of imminent IRA resignations.

Mr Adams, the Sinn Fein president, predicted that further large-scale Sinn Fein defections were unlikely. He said: "Maybe one or two people about the place may follow the lead, but let's not get this out of sync. We have little spats like this and what a leadership has to do is lead. We are not leading sheep."

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Easier access to Internet

HIGH-SPEED surfing on the Internet may soon be available at much lower cost thanks to new technology from British Telecom, *writes Chris Barrie*. Existing British phone lines will be transformed into rapid multi-media connections using "digital access technology", allowing customers to surf while using their phone.

Trials of the service, to be called Home Highway, will begin in 300 households in February. It may be offered nationwide in May.

Home Highway will allow customers to view goods for sale on the computer screen and phone up to order them, or play Internet-based games while talking to other players. At present, most computer users surf the net using slow analogue phone lines. The only alternative is an expensive digital ISDN line. BT and its suppliers, GPT and Ericsson, can now send digital signals down copper phone wire, allowing householders to use up to four lines in future — two digital — from one junction box.

BT estimates there are 6 million households with computers, but only 1 million on the Internet. It hopes 2 million more will be surfing by 2003.

Children's television is 'dumbing down'

Kamal Ahmed

THE BBC and ITV were facing criticism last week after one of the most detailed reports on children's programmes revealed a huge increase in the number of cartoons and repeats.

The report, by the Broadcasting Standards Commission, said factual and drama programmes for children were becoming an "endangered species", and that all channels were guilty of a "creeping erosion" of standards.

Old favourites like Play Away and Play School were being replaced by Teletubbies, the Simpsons and cheap animated series, it said.

Programmes for pre-school children were particularly weak, and the BBC had spent its entire pre-school budget for the next two years on Teletubbies alone.

Commission members said they were concerned that children's programmes had been "dumbed down" in an effort to attract more viewers.

Lack of money had also forced TV channels to buy more cheap American cartoons and imported dramas, to the detriment of home-grown drama serials.

"The broadcast media form an integral part of the social development of today's child," said Lady Howe, the commission's chairwoman. "Quality programming for children should encourage the child's development as a good citizen, with critical abilities and an interest in a wide range of issues."

She deplored "the relentless growth of the cartoon genre" and, in a veiled threat, said it might be necessary to legislate to ensure that the BBC stuck to a specific level and diversity of children's programming.

ITV and Channel 5 are already obliged to provide a certain number of hours each day for children.

Lady Howe recommended the imposition of controls on when, where and what type of children's programmes were broadcast.

The report studied children's television in Britain between 1992 and 1996 and compared it with 1981 figures.

It found the number of cartoons on BBC1 has risen from 26 per cent in 1992 to 35 per cent in 1996. In 1981, cartoons comprised 9 per cent of BBC1's children's programmes.

For ITV the output of cartoons has risen to 40 per cent in 1996, compared with 9 per cent in 1981, similar to the BBC. In the same period the number of factual programmes and drama has declined significantly.

"Cartoons are cheap to buy and it seems to us a rather lazy way of serving their audience," said the report's author, Maire Messenger Davies, of Cardiff university.

Pre-school children needed programmes where children were spoken to by adults as part of the preparation for starting nursery school.

The report said that despite the increase in the number of channels for children on satellite and cable, there had been no increase in diversity.

The BBC denied that it had allowed the standard of its children's programmes to slip.

"The BBC is committed to providing a range of quality programmes for children," said Roy Thompson, head of BBC children's commissioning and scheduling department. "There are more animation, but these are carefully scheduled to carry audiences on to other genres."

Blair unveils new curb on paedophiles

Alan Travis

THE Prime Minister, Tony Blair, last week unveiled a tough package of measures — including compulsory psychiatric treatment — to reassure parents their children will be protected from the 100,000 known paedophiles not covered by the national sex offenders' register.

The new powers, in the forthcoming Crime and Disorder Bill, will be used against those convicted or cautioned for sexual offences, including child abuse and rape, if police believe the named individual poses a threat to the public.

After a risk assessment by psychiatrists and probation officers, the court will have the power to issue a civil injunction or "community protection order" banning the sex offender from, for example, loitering near a school playground. The order will remain in force for a minimum of five years, and if it is broken the courts will have the power to order compulsory treatment and up to five years in prison.

The powers are designed to fill gaps in the law, and will affect paedophiles who left prison before the national register came into force earlier this year or who are not subject to limited supervision by the probation service.

"The community protection orders will be applied to those sex offenders who pose a serious threat to children and the public. I hope they will go some way to allaying the justifiable public concern about those who prey on children and other vulnerable young people," Mr Blair told the Commons last week.

He was backed by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, who said that thousands of known paedophiles did not have to register with the police despite the national sex offenders' list, which was introduced in September. The Home Office has estimated that 110,000 men have been convicted of sex offences against children but only about 10,000 are required to register.

"This cannot be allowed to continue," said Mr Straw. "Community protection orders will be applied to those sex offenders whose conduct poses a serious threat to children and the public. If this behaviour continues the offender will face a long prison sentence and heavy fines."

The announcement is bound to prompt accusations of ministers approaching sex offenders with a Clockwork Orange mentality — Stanley Kubrick's controversial 1971 film featured electric shock therapy to treat violent teenage criminals.

The treatment envisaged is based on psychiatric therapy rather than chemical castration or drug regimes. However, Richard Tilt, the director-general of the Prison Service, did confirm that his officials are looking at American research evidence to see if the use of "anti-libidinal" drugs, which are used to reduce an individual's sex drive, can prove effective to help cut the chances of convicted paedophiles re-offending.

Mr Tilt said there were a small group of inmates, mostly paedophiles, for whom the psychological programme had little impact on their attitudes towards sex crimes. It was believed that the use of drugs to cut their sex drive, combined with the sex treatment programme, could have a beneficial effect.

Communism's unsolved riddle

EIGHTY years after Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power in November 1917, the Russian Revolution is both the single most influential event of the 20th century and one of its most completely closed chapters. The Soviet state that Lenin and Stalin bloodily created and which defined the history of the next seven decades is so dead that many of today's teenagers have now not even heard of its existence. The ideas which once animated the revolution seem to have drained away into the sands just as completely, even — or especially — in the few remaining "communist" countries. Nobody with even the remotest shred of intellectual credibility today believes in communism, while the concept of social revolution, which inspired many decent people — as well as lots of bad ones — to sacrifice so much for so long, is now reserved for changes in eating and leisure habits rather than for the once historic struggle of class against class.

And yet the task of understanding the massive historical events that were unleashed by the Bolsheviks 80 years ago is far from dead and far from simple. The truth about communism is still hard to come by. Formerly closed archives may be more accessible than before the collapse of the USSR, although by no means all of them are open yet. The carapace of self-deception beneath which too much analysis of the Soviet Union sheltered for too long may no longer exist. Yet the facts about 20th century Russia and, even more important, their meaning, remain unresolved both in relation to their own time and in relation to ours.

New generations need to be constantly and unerringly reminded about the awesome scale of Soviet brutality and corruption. Yet it requires an explanation based on something more than the terror and wickedness of communism to explain why the Bolsheviks took power in 1917 or why, within three or four decades of their revolution, nearly a third of the world's people lived under regimes that paid homage to it. Equally, however, it requires more than a counter-revolutionary conspiracy theory to explain why, within another three to four decades, so many of those people threw off these regimes with scarcely a backward glance and barely a hand raised in serious opposition to them. The two great changes — the revolution of 1917 and its overthrow of 1989-91 — were the negation of one another, but both were driven by real events and real popular convictions. We delude ourselves if we believe that the monopoly of moral legitimacy belongs only to the latter.

The collapse of the rotten system that the Bolsheviks created does not mean that what has now been put in its place is either virtuous or certain to win the enthusiasm of the people. The comprehensive failure of 20th century Russian socialism casts a very long shadow. But it does not reflect as easily as many today like to suppose on the possibility of other forms in other places and, eventually, at other times.

Labour's first whiff of sleaze

SO MAYBE this is what Tony Blair meant by the Giving Age: you give us the money, we'll give you the policy. Sounds harsh, but the latest revelations about motor racing, cigarettes and the Government make it hard to draw any other conclusion. Big-money donors were able not only to get a face-to-face meeting with the Prime Minister, but also to talk him into reversing a signature government decision. If this had happened in the last days of the Major era we know what we would have called it: sleaze.

Labour denies there was any trade in cash-for-influence, but the evidence seems fairly straightforward — even with this week's report of yet another change of heart. The Government was committed to a blanket ban on tobacco advertising. Formula One, which relies heavily on lucrative sponsorship from the cigarette makers, wanted to be an exception. Labour said no. But then last week the policy suddenly changed in a U-turn that was so fast, it would have done Michael Schumacher proud.

At first this looked like nothing more than another Labour sell-out. An uglier reading surfaced with the disclosure that the minister responsible for signing Britain up to the Europe-wide advertising ban, Tessa Jowell, had a possible conflict of interest: her husband, lawyer David Mills, was a legal adviser and former director of an F1 company, Benetton Formula.

But the U-turn was not the action of the health minister, nor even of her immediate boss Frank Dobson. Instead it followed an October 16 meeting at Downing Street between Mr Blair and the three most powerful figures in Formula One — at least two of whom had strong links to the party. Max Mosley, president of the sport's governing body, the FIA, is a member of Labour's Thousand Club — admission confined to donors of £1,000 or more — while the federation's director-general, David Ward, was formerly chief researcher for the late Labour leader John Smith. The last member of the trio was Bernie Ecclestone, the true power behind Formula One. Once a multi-million pound donor to the Conservatives, he has now switched sides.

Mr Ecclestone is reported to have made a donation of as much as £1.5 million to Labour — a figure hotly denied by party officials. But they will not confirm how much Mr Ecclestone did give, arguing that the party is required to publish all its funding details in a single annual report to the Labour conference — in nearly a year's time.

This decision to hide behind the technicalities of the rulebook merely adds to the whiff of sleaze. When the Tories played that kind of game, Mr Blair rightly demanded openness. He explicitly promised a new, higher standard from his own government.

Downing Street says that noble position still stands, that it was persuaded by the merits of Formula One's arguments alone, believing that a prestige British industry would wither without tobacco money and would flee to the Far East. (Never mind that several cogent analyses that appeared over the weekend — see facing page — showed those arguments to be thin at the very best.)

IRA ceasefire in danger

THE LATEST rumblings from Belfast seem discouraging. The departure of three hawkish members of the IRA's ruling body — along with perhaps 20 others — looks like trouble. Pessimists fear they have seen a hairline crack in the ceasefire, a warning of the disaster to come. Gerry Adams had already sounded the alarm last week, in the kind of language he used when the first IRA ceasefire was shaky. He said that if ordinary people see no real change on the ground, they will dismiss the peace process as futile.

The pessimists' fear is clear enough: if the latest walkout is possible now, imagine how hardliners will react at the *end* of the talks process, when the IRA will be asked to accept an actual deal — with tangible compromises. Surely a full split is inevitable, with the hardmen breaking away to revive the "armed struggle". Even if the ceasefire is not in immediate danger, say these warning voices, last week's news reveals its terminal frailty.

But such alarm may not yet be warranted. The security forces in both Britain and Ireland have advised the two governments that both the nationalist and loyalist ceasefires remain secure. They add that the walkouts are not a surprise. Both London and Dublin have long known that a faction of the IRA is unhappy with the peace strategy — that much was confirmed two months ago when the Army Council distanced itself from Sinn Fein's decision to sign up for the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence.

It's even possible to see the flushing out of the dissidents as a boon for Mr Adams and his lieutenant Martin McGuinness: perhaps now the extremists are so marginalised they have no choice but to leave. On their recent trip to the United States the duo reinforced their position further, nailing down the support of the crucial Irish-American community — once the source of aid to the hardest of hardliners. The American Irish are now squarely behind the peace strategy. It has brought them access to the White House, and they don't want to lose it.

With the hawks fairly isolated, there is little cause for panic. But Mr Adams's warning words should not be ignored. The Belfast talks were due to move this week from process to substance. The sooner they get down to the serious business of peace, the better.

Bleating of UN lamb excites the Iraqi tiger

Martin Woollacott

HOW many wearisome times have we been here before? Iraq makes its move, the United Nations Security Council condemns, the United States threatens, and on occasion takes, military action, and Iraq backs down. Then we return to the situation more or less as it was. Saddam Hussain survives, somewhat strengthened, the US subsides, somewhat strained, sanctions remain, and the shell game over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, with the Iraqis cheating and lying, and the inspectors probing and sometimes finding, begins all over again.

This time it is about keeping Americans out of the weapons inspection teams, an Iraqi tactic aimed at exploiting divisions among the Security Council powers, and with the maximum aim of getting a timetable for the lifting of sanctions. The probability, as before, is that it will end without military action or with a token attack that brings the episode to an end.

But picture some other possibilities. What if the US took military action, and the Iraqis still did not back down, forcing the Americans to a second and third wave of attacks, some of them on targets where civilian deaths might result? What if Iraq then responded by terrorist attacks on US targets? What if, in some final escalation, Iraq used its missiles, armed with chemical or biological warheads, against Saudi Arabia or Israel? After all, the reason for the present crisis is precisely that Iraq is rightly suspected of retaining chemical and biological agents, or the capacity to make them quickly, just as she retains a few missiles with which to deliver them.

This, six years after the Gulf war, is the reality. Of course, it is theoretical and remote. Saddam wants to survive and keep power, not to die in some massive retaliatory attack. But who knows what might happen, with this man, in circumstances of desperation that outside powers, or internal rebels, or both, might inadvertently create? That was why, after the war, the effort to divest Saddam of his weapons of mass destruction began.

Unfortunately, while Saddam has lost many weapons and much weapons production capacity as a result of the UN programme, he still has some left. He needs them for another reason beyond their possible use as deterrent or threat against other nations. They are the crowning element in the panoply of death in which his regime is dressed as it faces its own people. They help keep Iraqis fearful and obedient. It is part of Saddam's terrible mystique, inside Iraq, that he should hold the keys to the chamber of horrors in which are locked weapons of mass destruction, and, if he should lose those keys, it would weaken him symbolically.

From the beginning the effort to divest him of those weapons suffered from a double contradiction. On the Iraqi side this was simply that Saddam, given his nature and his needs, could as soon truly give such weapons up as an addict can give up heroin. He would, the majority of those who had dealings with him believed, cheat right down to the last canister of nerve gas. And, if sanctions were lifted because he had, even so, disposed of all, or nearly all, of the weapons, he would immediately begin to reacquire them once the oil income began to come in again.

The other contradiction is among the powers who, through the Security Council, control the programme of weapons inspection and the sanctions against Iraq. This is now even more in the open than it was before. On the one hand there are the countries, such as the US and Britain, which are not prepared to lift sanctions even if Iraq gives up all its mass destruction weapons. Sanctions will only go, they say, if all kinds of other conditions, including those concerning human rights, are met by Iraq. Since, with Saddam in charge, they never can be, this was and is tantamount to saying that sanctions will be not be lifted until he falls. The other camp, led by France and Russia, complain that this removes any incentive for the regime to cooperate on the weapons programme. France and Russia further argue, less openly, that if the US wishes to get rid of the Iraqi regime, it should act effectively to do so, rather than follow policies that allow the regime to survive but rule out any normalisation, as well as imposing serious hardships on ordinary Iraqis.

There are ulterior motives. France and Russia are among those who have reached or are about to reach very advantageous oil exploration and co-production agreements with Iraq, the sort of deals that oil companies had believed were just no longer available in the Middle East. There are huge non-oil trade possibilities as well, once sanctions are lifted. On top of this, Russia in particular would regain political influence in a country where it was once an important actor.

THESE factors have combined over the last year to sharpen the differences within the Security Council to the point where, in spite of clear evidence that Iraq was hiding chemical and biological materials, the members nevertheless gave Baghdad six months to improve co-operation before weak additional sanctions were imposed. It was this temporising vote in September to which the Iraqis responded by banning Americans, sensing a weakening of US resolve and the ascendancy of the Russian-French school.

What followed skirts disaster, because for the first time in its history Unscom, the special commission set up by the Security Council to ensure Iraqi compliance on weapons, has been marginalised, with UN envoys dealing directly with Baghdad. And the desire to avoid military action that would lead to an open division between the powers has handed advantage to Iraq.

Both the Anglo-American and the Russo-French positions are badly flawed. The first is weakened by what at first may have been a lack of will to bring the Saddam regime down, and latterly has been more a lack of competence. The result has been to help Saddam by letting him see off a series of weak challenges including ill-planned coups. The second has elements of appeasement and greed. Both policies, and particularly in combination, serve to strengthen a regime which, if there was justice in the world, ought to have become history long ago.

Formula One is all about glamour and technology — as is New Labour. So it's no wonder they caved in, argues **Martin Jacques**

Wheel of fortune: Virgin's Richard Branson says tobacco companies have priced out rival sponsors

PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE COOPER

Anti-tobacco drive stalls on the grid

THE LABOUR government's decision to exempt Formula One from an immediate ban on tobacco advertising was the result of assiduous lobbying by the two key figures in motor sport, Max Mosley, president of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the sport's governing body, and Bernie Ecclestone, Formula One's promoter and impresario.

This culminated in a meeting with Tony Blair on October 16 which finally persuaded the Prime Minister to engage in a U-turn. He was convinced by the FIA argument. Proof of this is contained in the letter from Tessa Jowell, the Minister for Public Health, to the European Union's health ministers, which is little more than a rehearsal of the arguments in the FIA statement on the question.

The nub of this matter is whether the FIA's argument is correct. Its position rests on four key arguments. First, it believes the withdrawal of tobacco advertising would have a drastic effect on income. Second, in response to any EU-wide ban, the FIA would massively reduce the number of races held within Europe and increase the number in east Asia, eastern Europe and Latin America.

Third, any shift in the centre of gravity of Formula One from Europe to Asia, as a result of a ban, would, according to the FIA, "encourage relocation of its infrastructure outside the EU". In other words, Britain would lose its dominant position within the industry.

The FIA's fourth argument is that tobacco advertising in Formula One does not materially affect consumption. It is almost impossible to conduct research on Formula One sponsorship in isolation, but there is powerful evidence that sponsorship does help to boost consumption. There is also the small matter of why the tobacco companies bother to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on sports sponsorship. The FIA position is naïve, driven by commercial interest rather than serious scientific argument.

Mosley does not deny that Formula One will find other sponsors if a ban is imposed, but he believes the tobacco companies, because they have few other outlets, are prepared to pay a premium of 50 per cent. Jackie Stewart, who has refused to take tobacco advertising for his team, estimates that the team's income is 25-30 per cent less than it otherwise might be. Others have talked of a tobacco premium of 10-15 per cent. Richard Branson, a long-time campaigner against tobacco advertising, believes Formula One could find other sponsors but that the cigarette companies "are so desperate to reach a young TV audience they have priced everyone else out of the market".

The truth is that no one really knows. Certainly, Formula One's income would be reduced. But there is little reason to believe the sport could not adapt.

The effects of any cut in income would not necessarily be wholly harmful. For a decade, top drivers have been able to demand absurdly inflated salaries, largely funded by the tobacco companies. The first casualty of a tobacco ban would be Michael Schumacher, whose estimated salary of more than $30 million a year is partly funded by Marlboro. The top teams enjoy an extraordinarily lavish lifestyle. Three team proprietors, together with Ecclestone, feature in the Sunday Times list of the richest 500 people in the UK. More modest circumstances would not necessarily harm the sport.

Much of the money consumed by Formula One goes on fuelling an intensive technology war between the teams. A cut in tobacco income would affect this, but the consequences would not all be negative. In reducing the performance gap between the cars, it might well improve the racing and enhance the show. IndyCar, the United States equivalent of Formula One, is technologically less sophisticated, but the racing is more exciting.

So what of the the threat to take Formula One to east Asia and elsewhere? Of the 17 races this year, 10 were in EU countries, and only five were outside Europe. After decades of trying, there is still no US grand prix. The sport's claim to be global remains tenuous. Races are planned in South Korea, Malaysia and, at some point, China. But even these are proving difficult to stage. The South Korean grand prix has already been postponed twice and there are strong rumours that work on the new Malaysian circuit at Sepang has been suspended as a result of the country's financial troubles. East Asia is no easy option, more like a long and difficult slog.

The FIA has threatened to reduce the number of races in EU countries to three a year. What would the fans think? How would the circuits react? What would be the view of sponsors such as Shell and Goodyear? How would Ferrari and Italy respond?

The fact is that no sport is a free-floating, media phenomenon — each is culturally rooted. Formula One belongs, and will continue to belong first and foremost to Europe. Any threat to take it elsewhere would be fraught with danger for Ecclestone and Mosley: it would almost certainly result in a rival series based in Europe. Branson has stated that Virgin would set one up, while Stewart said: "It is wrong to think the sport has to leave the developed world in the event of a ban."

And what of the suggestion that the British motor racing industry, which brings together some extraordinary design, engineering and entrepreneurial talents, will relocate? This is the most tenuous argument of all. The motor racing industry, clustered around London's M25 orbital motorway, is the product of history and culture.

Like Silicon Valley in California, it is a community, a deeply-rooted network. Though global, it is also local. The fundamental reason for Ferrari's lack of success over the past 35 years is that it is based in Italy rather than in Britain. To imagine that the industry is about to decamp to Malaysia or Japan is fantasy.

The arguments put forward by the FIA are seriously flawed. They present an exaggerated and lurid picture of what would happen in the event of a ban. What is disturbing is that Blair was so easily convinced by them. He showed himself to be gullible, poorly briefed and badly served by his own instincts. Formula One is a metaphor for globalisation, modernity, corporate power, technology, glamour and success: all the things Blair admires and craves. The motor racing industry epitomises the New Britain.

In the face of the arguments of powerful performers such as Ecclestone and Mosley, he was dazzled by his own buzzwords. He chose the soft option. He displayed not strength but weakness. — *The Observer*



Smoking up for first time in 25 years

David Brindle

FIGURES on smoking in Britain are up for the first time in 25 years, particularly among young adults, an official survey reported last week.

The figures are acutely embarrassing for the Government, in the light of its U-turn in exempting Formula One motor racing from its proposed ban on sponsorship by tobacco companies.

Bill O'Neill, scientific adviser to the British Medical Association, said: "It shows the problems we are up against with an industry that is able to spend so much promoting the habit."

The rise is shown in the preliminary 1996 results of the General Household Survey, an annual analysis of some 9,000 households by the Office for National Statistics.

The survey had reflected a steady fall in smoking since 1972, when 52 per cent of men and 41 per cent of women said they used cigarettes. This time the figures are up from 28 to 29 among men, and 26 to 28 per cent among women.

Paul Hunter, principal researcher for the survey, said the finding for women was statistically significant — not a chance result — while that for men was less clear, although the previous fall had at least bottomed out. "It's too early to say whether this is part of a levelling out process or the start of an upturn."

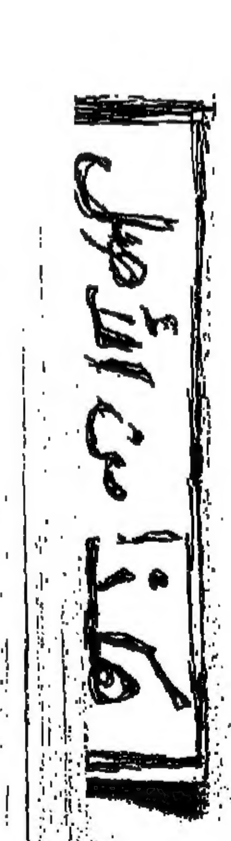
The survey found that cigarette smoking among men aged 20-24 rose to 43 per cent from 40 a year earlier; among men aged 25-34 it rose to 38 per cent from 34; and among women aged 25-34 it rose to 34 per cent from 30.

Among women aged 16-19, the rise went from 27 per cent to 32, though there was a fall from 28 per cent to 26 among men of the same age group.

The survey also showed a steady increase in alcohol consumption among women — but not among men — with the trend again most pronounced among the young.

Fourteen per cent of women said they drank more than the recommended limit of 14 units a week, compared with 9 per cent in 1984. In the 18-24 age bracket, the proportion was 24 per cent. Among men, 27 per cent said they drank more than the recommended 21 units — unchanged since the mid-1980s. But the figure for the 18-24 age group rose to 41 per cent from 35 in 1995.

Other findings showed the number of one-parent families stabilised at 22 per cent of all families, having risen sharply through the 1980s and early 1990s; burglaries were much more likely to hit families (55 incidents a year among every 1,000 households) than elderly people living alone (23 incidents among every 1,000); and more than one in three people reported a long-standing illness.



Halifax faces windfall onslaught

Teresa Hunter

BRITAIN'S biggest mortgage lender, the Halifax, faces a series of legal challenges in courts around the world as anger mounts at the way thousands of customers working overseas were excluded from its free share bonanza.

The majority of Halifax savers and borrowers temporarily living abroad qualified for thousands of pounds worth of free shares when the former building society floated on the stock market earlier this year.

However, around 55,000 customers living predominantly in Canada, the United States and a range of other excluded territories, were disenfranchised because the Halifax believed their national laws made it too difficult for a legal distribution.

A group of disenfranchised customers plans to challenge that view in a Canadian court, and a newly established ginger group, the United Halifax Victims Group, is considering fighting the new bank by launching other law suits around the world. In Fiji, Stephen Vardigans of the University of South Pacific is organising another splinter group.

Their main complaint is that, having been told by the Halifax before the flotation they would receive free shares, they were not advised that a non-UK address could jeopardise the windfall. Many who are working abroad for a short spell have their main home in the UK and had forwarded an overseas address for correspondence only.

Gary Mitchell, who is working in the US, is typical of many. He says: "From the beginning of the conversion process I was told that because I had more than £100,000 [$168,000] in my savings account I would receive the maximum amount of shares. At one point prior to the conversion I even wrote to the Halifax advising them I may be withdrawing my savings. They advised me that if I did so I would lose out on the share bonus.

"Throughout the conversion process I complied with all requests from the Halifax, completing forms, voting for the conversion, etc. Not once did anyone mention the fact that if my registered address, the night before the conversion, was not in the UK or a permitted territory I would not be entitled to my shares."

Dennis Milner is furious to find himself excluded after being seconded through the British government to the Netherlands to investigate war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. He says: "Having been a loyal investor for many years I really did think that I would receive fair and equitable treatment."

Richard Le Mare is equally aggrieved to find himself disenfranchised after emigrating to New Zealand, even though he saved with the society for more than 20 years. He says: "When we emigrated in 1994 we were advised against closing our account and withdrawing our savings because we would miss out on a large windfall. So we left our savings of more than £20,000 in the UK and waited patiently."

But the Halifax is not the only culprit. Beth Chatten, of Calgary in Canada, fell foul of the Woolwich after living in London for 26 years. "When I returned to Canada in 1996 I retained my long-term investment account with the Woolwich Building Society," she explains.

"Woolwich plc did not contact me, and when I wrote to inquire about the value of my shares, the response was that it was 'too onerous' to transfer shares to people living outside the approved list of countries. I could easily have retained a contact address in the UK in order to receive the bonus given to other investors, had I been informed that this was a requirement."

Both institutions strongly deny that they failed to warn members living in certain parts of the world that they would be excluded from the windfalls unless they re-registered with a UK address. This information was, however, tucked away in the small print of the complex legal transfer document that was sent to all members.

In Brief

BRITISH Telecom's plans for international expansion were in tatters after it was outgunned in the takeover battle for US telecoms company MCI by a $37 billion agreed offer from rival WorldCom. BT will pocket $3 billion profit on the sale of its 20 per cent stake in MCI.

CITY of London police claim in partnership with the US Secret Service to have smashed a $790 million fraud involving American bonds. Three people were arrested — an American, a Briton and a Taiwanese national.

THE volatility on the world's stock markets claimed another victim as Mexico was forced to set up a $2.5 billion contingency loan, backed by 31 banks from 10 countries. Meanwhile Brazil, whose stock market crashed 6.4 per cent, announced cost-cutting and revenue-raising measures to try to reassure investors.

BRITAIN'S economic progress is being threatened by the conflict between surging domestic demand and an export sector struggling to cope with the strong pound, according to a report by the International Monetary Fund. Meanwhile the Bank of England raised interest rates to 7.25 per cent, their highest level for five years.

THE chairman of BMW, Bernd Pischetsrieder, revealed that two dozen multi-millionaires are backing his company's interest in acquiring Rolls-Royce Motors. He said he was not involved in the rumoured $1.7 billion bid by smaller rival Mayflower for Vickers, owners of Rolls-Royce.

A $3.4 BILLION spending spree was announced by the UK retail group Marks & Spencer as it embarked on an aggressive expansion programme at home and abroad.

LEVI-STRAUSS is to sack one-third of its North American workforce and close 11 of its 37 US plants, citing global cost pressures and the rise of big retailers' own-label jeans.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates November 10	Sterling rates November 3
Australia	2.4198-2.4228	2.3500-2.3531
Austria	20.31-20.33	20.48-20.50
Belgium	59.52-59.63	60.01-60.12
Canada	2.3720-2.3741	2.3531-2.3554
Denmark	10.98-10.99	11.07-11.08
France	9.66-9.67	9.73-9.75
Germany	2.8863-2.8887	2.9102-2.9128
Hong Kong	13.03-13.04	12.96-12.97
Ireland	1.1095-1.1131	1.1216-1.1237
Italy	2,827-2,831	2,849-2,853
Japan	209.22-209.46	202.43-202.69
Netherlands	3.2501-3.2535	3.2767-3.2798
New Zealand	2.6930-2.6974	2.6493-2.6530
Norway	11.73-11.75	11.84-11.86
Portugal	294.49-294.82	296.92-297.26
Spain	243.71-243.97	245.72-246.03
Sweden	12.62-12.64	12.66-12.68
Switzerland	2.3477-2.3507	2.3719-2.3747
USA	1.6856-1.6875	1.6765-1.6778
ECU	1.4624-1.4642	1.4746-1.4767

FTSE100 Share Index down [illegible], FTSE 250 Index down [illegible]. Gold down [illegible]

Suzanne Goldenberg reports on the anti-union Sri Lankan sweatshops where women routinely work 14-hour days, seven days a week for very little money

Colombo stitch-up

BRITAIN'S high street clothing giants are pouring millions into Sri Lanka's garment factories, where unions are effectively banned and where hundreds of thousands of women work for a basic monthly wage of $44 — or less.

In the past year, British garment manufacturers, and their retail clients, have increased their holdings in Sri Lankan factories by a third, according to the Board of Investment, which oversees the industry, and local industrialists.

"In the last year many of the big brand names like Victoria's Secret have increased their orders out of Sri Lanka by more than 30 per cent," said Thilan Wijaysinghe, the board chairman.

They are dealing with an industry where unions are banned by administrative fiat and where women routinely work 14-hour days, seven days a week because they can not survive on the basic wage. Mr Wijaysinghe says 350,000 people — almost all of them women — are employed in Sri Lanka's garment industry, which is concentrated in heavily guarded Free Trade Zones where entry is restricted to pass holders.

"It's an administrative ban and partly it's due to the heavy concentration of companies in the area," said Mr Wijaysinghe. "We control external trade unions from entering the area and we encourage the formation of in-house workers' councils."

More than a third of the women will spend up to 40 per cent of the income on food, but studies of garment workers have found more than half are underweight and undernourished.

Some, like Manuela de Soyza, aged 22, burn out early. She has worked for three years in a Korean-owned factory that produces men's parkas and sports jackets, although her job is limited to stitching arm holes. She is hoping to return to her village by Christmas.

"Now I am tired I can't work, I am sick," she said. "Sometimes I am fainting." She believes her weight has dropped to barely 40kg.

Ms de Soyza described a regime where overseers set impossible targets and then punish failure by shouting and occasionally hitting the workers. "If I am sewing too fast, damage is come. Then they come from checking and hit me with the jacket itself," she said. "Once the zipper hit me in the eye and I was off work for three days." Although a relative veteran in an industry where there is rapid turnover, her basic wage is 2,600 rupees ($44); 250 goes on rent for a room shared with nine other women.

Although conditions at Western-owned factories are better, this is the prevailing climate in which the British firms operate. Britain has climbed to sixth place among foreign investors in the industry.

British high street firms indirectly linked with the garment industry include Adams' children's wear, Burtons, C&A, Marks & Spencer and, recently, Tesco. They join American and Asian firms such as Calvin Klein and Donna Karan designer outfits, Gap, Esprit, Nike sportswear, Victoria's Secret lingerie, and Gloria Vanderbilt and Liz Claiborne clothing for women.

Within the past two decades, garment manufacturing has become Sri Lanka's largest gross earner of foreign exchange, beating off its traditional exports of tea and rubber, and the flagging tourist industry. Since 1979, foreign investment in Sri Lanka's garment industry has reached about $150 million, and a board of investment spokeswoman said as much as a quarter of those funds would be of British origin.

Many investors were lured to Sri Lanka by cheap land and long tax holidays. And because most factories import machinery and cloth, and ship the finished products out again, the benefits for Sri Lankans are relatively slim.

The government claims the garment industry as a rare success story in a country that has been devastated by a 14-year civil war. However, Sri Lankan activists say the factories are less about creating jobs for impoverished villagers than about pleasing foreign investors.



A woman at work in a garment factory in Galle, southern Sri Lanka: hours are long and injuries not uncommon PHOTO: MAX WHITAKER

Apart from a ban on trade unions, Sri Lanka's anti-terrorism law makes it illegal to publish or circulate any document that could damage export earnings.

"The government has to strike a balance between the interests of the free trade zone workers and the interests of investors, but they always side with investors," said Nalindi Perera of the Social and Economic Development Centre.

She says the workers are in no position to defend themselves. Overwhelmingly women aged 18-25, many of the workers — though the majority are educated to O level — have never left their villages. In a society where there is relatively little mixing between men and women, they are seen as easy prey. So great is the social stigma associated with garment workers that Sri Lanka matrimonial advertisements often stipulate: "No factory girls."

In the absence of trade unions, activist groups such as Da Bindu (Drops of Sweat), which are also barred from the factories, have appointed themselves advocates for the women. Da Bindu's leader, Mrs H Samanmali, reels off a list of triumphs in the past decade. They are tiny victories: reinstatement of a worker sacked from a German factory for writing a poem lamenting her life, increasing compensation for a woman who put a needle through her eye from $1 to $76 and forming a support group for a woman who was raped on the way to the factory on Christmas Day last year.

The names of the garment workers mentioned in this report have been changed

Balkan summit furthers regional détente

Didier Kuntz in Athens

THE heads of state and of government of seven Balkan countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Turkey and Yugoslavia), as well as a representative of Bosnia, attended an "historic" summit in Heraklion, Crete, last week. The summit aimed to affirm their determination to reinforce stability and security in that volatile region.

It was the first time that the "freely elected" heads of government in southeast Europe had met, according to a communiqué signed by two presidents, Kiro Gligorov of Macedonia and Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia, and five prime ministers, Victor Ciorbea of Romania, Ivan Kostov of Bulgaria, Fatos Nano of Albania, Kostas Simitis of Greece and Mesut Yilmaz of Turkey. All the leaders were accompanied by their foreign ministers.

"The meeting was a success, because they came and talked. It was the first joint effort to examine the region's problems," said Simitis, the architect of the summit, whose manner is very different from the nationalist style of his Socialist predecessor, Andreas Papandreou.

Several leaders who had not been on speaking terms for years, or even decades, were able to exchange views. It was the first time, for example, that Milosevic had taken part in an international conference since the end of fighting in former Yugoslavia; the first time Gligorov had been to Greece since the row between Athens and Skopje over the name "Macedonia".

The last time an Albanian leader and a Yugoslav leader had met was in 1947. And it was the first time a Turkish prime minster had visited Greece in nearly 10 years.

Turkey's prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz, plays chess at the end of last week's summit PHOTO SIMELA PANTZARTZI

The countries represented, of which only Greece belongs to the European Union and only Greece and Turkey are Nato members, discussed their future, which, the final communiqué insisted, was orientated towards "European and Euro-Atlantic integration".

They also stressed that they wanted to turn their region into an area of co-operation and economic prosperity, and had therefore decided to promote neighbourliness and the observance of international law. They pledged to respect the inviolability of borders and the territorial integrity of states, and to support the peaceful solution of disputes.

With that in mind, the eight countries decided to meet at least once a year at foreign minister level. They also pledged to promote cultural relations, as well as the fight against crime, terrorism and illegal immigration. In addition, they agreed to beef up economic co-operation along with transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure by organising regular meetings between the ministers concerned.

As soon as they arrived in Crete on November 2, the eight representatives began to hold bilateral meetings. No immediate solutions were found to existing problems, but there was a change of atmosphere. Nano and Milosevic, for example, announced that they had initiated a process of diplomatic normalisation, though no progress was made on the thorny problem of Kosovo, the Serbian province with a majority of ethnic Albanians, who seek independence.

Milosevic extended an invitation to his Turkish opposite number, Suleyman Demirel, to visit Belgrade. Gligorov and Nano promised to improve relations, but the Macedonian leader refused to recognise the Albanian university in the Macedonian town of Tetevo — a source of friction between the two countries.

Gligorov failed to convince his Bulgarian counterpart, Kostov, to recognise the existence of a Macedonian language that is distinct from Bulgarian. This dispute is holding up the signature of some 20 bilateral agreements. And no headway was made on the issue of the name of Macedonia, which was discussed by Gligorov and Simitis.

The summit enabled Simitis and Yilmaz to reopen the lines of communication between Greece and Turkey, which had been on hold for several months after a spate of incidents and threats. Their talks, which Simitis described as "fruitful", prompted a frosty reaction from the Greek press and were criticised by the rightwing opposition.

(November 6)

Kabila fails to deliver on Congo's hopes

Frédéric Fritscher in Kinshasa

MOBUTU Sese Seko's Zaire did not pay its government employees; nor does Laurent-Désiré Kabila's Democratic Republic of Congo. As under the previous regime, anyone in a position of authority tries to exploit it.

Take the traffic police, who have bright new blue and gold uniforms. "They get dirty rather easily, but we can be seen from a long way away," said Aimée, who is very strict about people observing the highway code. "This is serious: you forgot to indicate. We'll have to go down to the police station," she told me, snatching my car documents from me and leaping into my car.

"The boss is strict. It'll cost you $200. You *Mundeles* ["whites" in Lingala], you think you can turn without using your indicator, like in Europe. This is really serious." Then she began to drop some heavy hints: "Perhaps I'll make an exception. We could come to some arrangement between ourselves." Everyone coughs up. Whites pay in dollars, Congolese in zaires. The old "Mobutu rags" will continue to circulate until monetary reform brings in the Congolese franc. Corruption is not institutionalised, as it was under Mobutu. But the temptations are great.

Senior officials in Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF) have been caught with their hands in the till. Yet they already live in luxury, occupying villas taken over from Mobutu's henchmen or rooms in Kinshasa's luxury hotels. They drive around in air-conditioned cars they have requisitioned or confiscated. Soldiers and government employees on the bottom rung of the ladder get a poor deal.

Kinshasans are mostly worse off than they were before. They had nothing under Mobutu, but were able to survive by wheeling and dealing. Now, the moral order imposed by the new government makes that difficult.

Poverty is on the increase. Hundreds of children that used to loiter in the streets have been rounded up and detained by the authorities. There are more and more beggars in the centre of town.

People have dug up pavements, roundabouts and cemetery paths and planted cassava, spinach and other vegetables. Any available space has been put under cultivation in an attempt to improve the diet. This is not a new phenomenon, but is more widespread than before.

The vast majority of Kinshasans wanted Kabila to win. They applauded Mobutu's departure and the arrival of ADF troops on May 17. They believed Kabila's promises and looked forward to a better life. Nothing has changed for them. Yet ministry sources claim that what the Congolese now have is "hope".

Kinshasans agree on one point: there is better security. They are no longer constantly harried by hordes of unpaid soldiers who used to steal from them. But even this is becoming less true. There are a large number of troops in Kinshasa, and misbehaviour is becoming more frequent. The "Kadogos", young members of the ADF who came from the eastern part of the country, brandish Kalashnikovs as they swagger into shops, bars, hotels and restaurants and help themselves. They steal cars and petrol, brutalise women and sometimes have shootouts among themselves.

A Swissair aircraft was unable to land in the capital on November 2 because soldiers, angry at not being paid, were firing at others who had come to disarm them. Last month, another aircraft was hit by gunfire as it took off, and an Air France plane was held at the end of the runway by armed men.

Since coming to power, the new government has managed to turn the whole population against it. Although the promised transition to democracy never came in the last seven years of Mobutu's reign, the Kinshasans acquired a taste for politics. They find it unforgivable that Kabila has gagged the parties, sidelined Etienne Tshisekedi, leader of the radical opposition to Mobutu, and claimed in a Belgian newspaper interview that Tshisekedi was one of "Mobutu's agents".

Kinshasa's 5 million inhabitants, most of whom live in working-class suburbs, accuse Kabila of behaving just like his predecessor. "We're still on the same bus, it's just the driver that's changed," says an old man in Matongué. According to the polling institute Bercl, 60 per cent of the 825 Kinshasans it questioned described the new regime as "dictatorial".

(November 6)

An Italian lesson to be learnt

EDITORIAL

GERMANY'S failure to reform its pension system and the improvement — albeit small — that the Italian government has just made to its own system are a perfect illustration of the cracker-barrel wisdom so dear to Chancellor Helmut Kohl. When asked if he thought Italy would qualify to join Europe's single currency, he quoted one of his mother's sayings: "You must look at your own plate and not your neighbour's."

At a time of mounting tension between French workers and employers over the 35-hour week and truckers' pay, it may be the right time for France to look at what is going on in neighbouring countries.

Granted, the situations in Germany and Italy are not really comparable. The ruling coalition in Bonn wanted to reduce pensions and impose reforms that would lower companies' labour costs and transfer part of that burden to indirect taxes.

The reforms were resisted by the Social Democratic opposition, which controls the Bundesrat (the upper house of parliament), and whose approval was indispensable. It was an undoubted failure, but not one that had a direct effect on Germany's budget deficit. The finance minister, Theo Waigel, has imposed a credit freeze in the hope of enabling Germany to keep to the 3 per cent limit he so strongly believes in.

The situation is very different in Italy. The efforts of Romano Prodi's government to trim the country's pension system are designed to achieve immediate budget savings that will enable Italy to meet the Maastricht criteria on the single currency.

Germany never doubted it would be in the first wave of countries joining a single currency. Without the Germans, there would simply be no euro in 1999. Prodi, on the other hand, had to launch Italy into an obstacle race. Only a year ago, no one thought it had any chance of success.

After a programme of budgetary austerity that almost brought down the government, welfare reform was one of the last hurdles Prodi had to clear. But it was also a bone of contention with the Communist Refoundation party, whose support was vital to the ruling centre-left coalition.

The Italian employers' federation has criticised Prodi for being content with half-measures, and there is discontent among civil servants. But the prime minister has managed to obtain the backing of the trade unions, which is no mean achievement.

Prodi's methods are worth examining. They illustrate the virtues of social dialogue. One of the challenges now facing the French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, is how he can replace an ethos of confrontation with one of compromise.

(November 5)

Life through the lens

Actor Michel Piccoli has moved behind the camera to direct a charming film, writes **Jean-Michel Frodon**

FIRST a poser: which leading French male film star, wearing a skirt, sang Sylvie Vartan's Comme un Garçon in an unknown woman director's first feature in 1993? The answer is Michel Piccoli, in Christine Citti's Ruptures. But a more accurate answer would be: it couldn't have been anyone but Piccoli.

Piccoli is very much his own man. As he says: "I don't want to become an old actor who waits to be offered the part of King Lear." He has just popped back into the limelight in two unexpected places: he is currently appearing, with Lucinda Childs, in Bob Wilson's production of Marguerite Duras's play, La Maladie de la Mort; and he has just directed his first feature, a daring, low-key film called Alors Voilà, (sic).

"Wonderful, isn't it?" This is a phrase that often trips from his lips in the course of his anecdotes, recollections and philosophising, which are all informed with his strong political convictions and love of his fellow human beings. He pronounces the words with a childlike wonderment and a patriarch's wisdom. Both the wonderment and the wisdom are put on, of course — Piccoli is a consummate actor. But "put on" does not mean simulated or false, just shaped in such a way as to be better perceived.

At one point in his career, almost 25 years ago, the press tried to typecast Piccoli as the archetype of the upper-middle-class man. It is true that he played a succession of pin-striped doctors, lawyers, company directors, surgeons, politicians and property developers — characters that loom large in French films.

But those who saw him as a star in that very restricted palette of roles cannot have seen Claude Faraldo's Themroc (1972), in which Piccoli, after returning to a prehistoric state in the middle of Paris, feeds on the raw flesh of riot policemen. They cannot have noticed his complicity with the iconoclastic Marco Ferreri in the dark excesses of La Grande Bouffe (1973), the extravagant irony of Touche Pas À la Femme Blanche (1974), and above all the controlled libertarian madness of Dillinger e Morto (1969).

That was 28 years ago, when Piccoli was 44. But the crucial encounter of his life, the one that left a lasting stamp on everything he did after that, had already taken place some years earlier, when he met that most obsessional, crazy, rigorous, polite, possessed and perverse of directors, Luis Buñuel.

It was Buñuel who revealed Piccoli when he chose him to act in one of his minor films, La Mort en ce Jardin, in 1956. Yet that was already Piccoli's 15th film: since 1945 he had appeared, fleetingly, in films by Christian-Jaque, Louis Daquin, Alexandre Astruc, Jean Delannoy and Jean Renoir (French Cancan).

Piccoli was young at the time — in other words not yet the Piccoli we know. He was an acting exception in that he became a star and a charmer the moment he ceased to be young, playing opposite Simone Signoret in La Mort en ce Jardin, then Jeanne Moreau in Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre (1964), Catherine Deneuve in Belle de Jour (1967), and then in Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie (1972) and Le Fantôme de la Liberté (1974).

Piccoli hovered on the fringes of the New Wave, appearing in Le Doulos (1962), by one of the movement's most important but least recognised precursors, Jean-Pierre Melville, in Jean-Luc Godard's Le Mépris (1963) and Agnès Varda's Les Créatures (1965).

He also acted in Alain Resnais' La Guerre Est Finie (1966) and, under Jacques Demy's direction, played first the nice, loving and fey Monsieur Dame in Les Demoiselles de Rochefort (1967), then the dangerous and deeply moving madman in Une Chambre en Ville (1982).

Piccoli was the first actor in France to become a film star as a result of appearing on television. The programme was Marcel Bluwal's immensely successful version of Molière's Don Juan (1965).

Once he was famous, Piccoli could have sat on his laurels. Instead, he decided to set off in another direction. "With pride, passion and amusement," he now says, adding: "My dream would have been for Robert Bresson, not having seen me in any film, to have stopped me in the street and offered me a part. I would have replied that I had too much work at the office — that would have been the high point of my acting career."

With film-makers who have been important for him, such as Godard, Claude Sautet and Ferreri, Piccoli says he felt almost as though he had become their spokesman or representative on the screen. He became increasingly interested in what goes into the rest of the film-making process — film stock, editing, auditoria. "I've long been in the habit of looking through the camera at what is happening on the other side."



Piccoli: 'I try to make actors feel free to invent, to enjoy themselves'

Piccoli also sank money into films that would have been unable to get off the ground without his help. He virtually bankrupted himself with Luciano Tovoli's Le Général de l'Armée Morte in 1983. That same year he acted in Combat de Nègres et de Chiens, a play by the then unknown Bernard-Marie Koltès, directed by Patrice Chéreau.

Piccoli appeared in successive productions of The Cherry Orchard by Peter Brook and Chéreau, and of A Winter's Tale by Chéreau and Luc Bondy. In 1989, Piccoli tried his hand at theatre direction with Une Vie de Théâtre, adapted from a David Mamet play. "It was a flop," he says.

Piccoli remains bitterly aware that he failed as president of the 1995 celebrations of the first 100 years of cinema. "I accepted the job at Jack Lang's request, before the change of government, knowing he would give me the necessary political support to do the job properly. But in 1995 Mitterrand was ill, and Toubon [the new culture minister] led us up the garden path. So did Chirac. He invited me to the Paris City Hall. He was charming and considerate and made lots of promises. But he kept none of them. I was probably not cut out for the job, I don't possess that kind of authority."

Of his leading role in the semi-official film that Varda made for the centenary, Les Cent et Une Nuits, Piccoli says nothing — which is probably just as well.

Alors Voilà, is not the first film he has directed: "My first film was a short I made for Amnesty International in 1991. I was going to act in it, then there was talk of my directing it, and I said to myself 'Why not?'. I realised how much I would like to direct films when children were in front of the camera, and the impression of a group began to take shape. Wonderful, isn't it?"

Then came another short in 1994, Train de Nuit, based on a short story by François Maspero, which featured the extraordinary Dominique Blanc, one of the cast of mostly unknown actors in Alors Voilà,. "Unknown? Not to me! Most of them work in the theatre. I chose them one by one. For me, the casting was part of the scenario — it was vitally important."

Maurice Garrel, however, is an established actor. "He's always been a friend, and I hadn't thought of him for the part of the patriarch who rules over the family. I wanted a non-professional actor. 'That's convenient,' Maurice said. 'I've been trying not to be an actor for 40 years.' He was right. There was Roland Amstutz, too. His part was written with him in mind. He committed suicide just after shooting ended." Piccoli falls silent for a moment.

Piccoli is a cheerful, amiable man who likes to describe himself as a "happy fool". He works hard on his lightness of touch, like an acrobat, and denies that he has the experience to direct actors, despite his 50 years in the profession.

But he is quick to contradict himself: "I know how to be considerate. I know when people need me and what has to be done. As an actor I like directors who have the authority that goes with being an *auteur*, but who remain extremely attentive to other people.

"I know, for example, that it's a good idea to be at the makeup sessions every morning. It's there that you can sound out the atmosphere and sense each person's mood. From that point on, I try to make the actors feel free to invent, to ensure they enjoy themselves."

That freedom, that rich texture of relationships, can be sensed at every moment of Alors Voilà,. The title seems to be saying that everything is obvious, whereas nothing about the film is obvious, least of all why an established actor like Piccoli should want to direct a feature.

"I couldn't raise the money. The project was turned down by TV. I'm known in the business as a maverick, as someone who doesn't do anything the way other people do. I'm actually rather proud of that reputation. But what they couldn't understand was why I should want to direct the film as well.

"It wasn't just the decision-makers in TV who mumbled excuses. I showed the scenario to professional scriptwriters. They said I couldn't make a film with it. But what they didn't say was why I couldn't. Luckily there was Paolo Branco, the producer of Raul Ruiz's Généalogie d'un Crime, in which I appear. He is one of the few producers capable of getting involved in a project like mine. So we made a low-budget movie — low-budget but happy. Wonderful, isn't it?"

(October 26-27)

Cinema in the role of sensitive scenery

REVIEW
Jean-Michel Frodon

THE first thing that strikes you as you watch Alors Voilà, (the comma in the title is important) is the sheer multiplicity of the characters, each of whom possesses his or her own presence and intensity. Michel Piccoli's first feature film as director is not a crowd movie, nor even a group movie, but, with 18 main characters, it certainly teems with life.

Right from the opening sequence — a family meal during which the many diners bow to the authority of a patriarch (wonderfully played by Maurice Garrel) in a bistro, or possibly a flat — Piccoli starts to unravel a complicated skein of relationships linking them to each other according to differences of generation, filiation, desires and affinities.

That is the essence of the movie. Yet it is not a film without a story line. In fact it overflows with stories, as one might expect given the large number of characters — stories of crooks, love stories, stories about gambling, satisfied or frustrated dreams, children's stories and moments of adult vaudeville.

All those stories go to make up a family drama involving three factions: the lorry-driving son's clan, the accountant son's clan, and the joker daughter Rose, who bewitches the patriarch.

But the important thing is not the thread that links together, to a greater or lesser degree (usually lesser), these snatches of narrative, but the way the camera weaves its way between the characters in an almost constant half-light, as though in search of secret signs and hidden tokens that will lead from one group to another, from a moment of irony to a mood of drama, burlesque or fantasy.

As the title Alors Voilà, suggests, everything hangs on the comma. It is a discreet, almost casual preamble, a way of saying "Once upon a time . . ." or "So it happened like this . . ." before starting a story.

It all adds up to a film that is perfectly valid in its own right, and there would be little more to say about it if it did not also happen to be Piccoli's first feature-length film as a director, and if it were not the complete opposite of what one might expect of a first film by a film star.

The main danger is when a star uses a movie as a vehicle for his or her ego; there is no risk of that here, as Piccoli does not appear in the film. Another pitfall is the temptation for the director to call on his players to produce *tours de force* of acting which are designed to show them at their best; there is no danger of that happening with the sensitive and restrained performances of Piccoli's admirably composed cast.

So perhaps there is a "message". Surely Piccoli the star must have had something urgent he wanted to say to the public? He did not, thank God — apart from secretly hinting throughout Alors Voilà, that he truly loves and understands the cinema, to which he has made such a great contribution.

Indeed, the central character of the film is the cinema itself — in the shape of an old patriarch, a pretty woman and a little girl. In other words, cinema boils down to *mise-en-scène*. It is heartening that one should be reminded of that fact by a 72-year-old tiro.

(October 23)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Hitting Saddam Where It Hurts

COMMENT
Jim Hoagland

SADDAM HUSSEIN is the corpse who won't die, the telltale heart beating loudly beneath the boards where America thought he had been buried forever. But Saddam claws his way up periodically to snarl anew at the world.

The Clinton White House treats these episodes as moments of sound and fury without cost for U.S. interests. Saddam is "crazy" to test American might. He is "shooting himself in the foot," the Clinton spinners repeated last week. He soon will be "back in his box."

Instead of Edgar Allan Poe, the spinners seem to be reading Mario Puzo. They portray the Iraqi dictator as an incompetent, erratic mafia chieftain who needs an occasional belt in the chops with a cruise missile to confine his rackets and murder to Harlem or Hell's Kitchen.

But that neglects the moral and strategic costs that these continuing confrontations with Saddam impose on U.S. leadership in the world.

Each new confrontation saps respect for America. Each confrontation demonstrates the futility of military force that is not harnessed either to an effective political strategy or to the political will to deal with a declared enemy who has secreted away deadly VX poison gas, several score Scud missiles and anthrax weapons.

Throughout the Arab world rulers and citizens alike believe that the world's only superpower could remove Saddam's regime if it really wanted to. Because Saddam's continued rule serves a useful purpose for them — be it controlling oil prices or keeping Iraq's Shiites and Kurds subjugated and brutalized — the Arabs assume that his continued rule serves some unacknowledged U.S. purpose as well.

This suspicion is increasingly voiced in Europe and Asia, and contributes to the willingness of France, Russia and others to distance themselves from U.S. strategy on Iran as well as Iraq.

Saddam's challenge to Americans serving on the U.N. Special Commission inspection teams is not short-term bluff. By immediately agreeing to talk to a high-level U.N. delegation about this unilateral move, Saddam underlines that he is still accepted as the legitimate ruler of Iraq by the United Nations, the United States and the rest of the world.

The diplomats dispatched to Baghdad were instructed to chastise him, but they still treat Saddam as a member of their club by going there. And Russia, France and the Arab League have gone on record opposing any military action against Iraq over this defiance, providing Baghdad with a significant diplomatic and psychological marker to cite in future disputes.

President Bush compared Saddam to Hitler, reminding the world of his genocide against the Kurds, his use of poison gas, the rape of Kuwait and other atrocities. But after all that, the Iraqi leader's officials are still seated on U.N. human rights commissions as well as all other important international institutions.

Saddam has been obstructing and harassing U.N. inspectors for nearly two years, without significant reaction from Washington or U.N. headquarters. The inspection teams cannot protect themselves. They are in Iraq at Saddam's sufferance. He has made the world acknowledge that through this conflict.

The Clinton administration has left itself with few choices and few serious allies in dealing with Iraq. A repeat of the ineffectual missile raids that capped two previous "showdowns" would do more harm than good. New sanctions will not change his behavior. Instead, the White House should hit Saddam in his sovereignty and in his personal protection, the two areas that will hurt him the most.

Washington should now begin a serious campaign to attack Saddam's legitimacy by providing active, vigorous leadership of the international effort to indict Saddam and his henchmen as war criminals. Clinton and his aides should challenge Baghdad's credentials at the United Nations and in its agencies. They should encourage the creation of an Iraqi government-in-exile and promise to recognize it.

Harnessed to a political program to deny Saddam legitimacy, one military campaign would make sense now: an assault on the Special Republican Guard units that protect not only Saddam and his palaces but also the hiding places for Iraq's deadly secret arsenal. Zeroing in on these units for missile and air strikes might make them rethink their support for Saddam.

Except for the 100 hours of Desert Storm in 1991, the United States and its allies have treated Saddam's regime as an acceptable evil. As Poe warns, evil cannot be compartmentalized or hidden. Each time Saddam claws his way up, it also exposes the international community's complicity in his survival.

Drug Lord's Physicians Murdered

Molly Moore in Mexico City

THE MUTILATED bodies of two physicians said to have participated in a fatal surgical procedure on Mexico's most powerful drug smuggler have been found embedded in concrete-filled barrels beside a highway, the attorney general's office said last week.

Authorities said they suspect that another mangled but unidentified body — also found last week in a matching barrel of concrete — may be that of another doctor who assisted in the surgery.

The killings were reminders of the savagery of Mexico's all-out drug wars, which U.S. and Mexican law enforcement officials say now rival the ferocity generated by Colombian drug cartels and U.S. and Italian mafias of earlier eras.

The surgery — facial reconstruction and liposuction conducted on July 4 — led to the death of Amado Carrillo Fuentes, head of a notorious drug trafficking network based in the city of Ciudad Juarez, just across the border from El Paso, Texas. Since Carrillo's death, his syndicate's territory has been swept by a torrent of violence, including dozens of revenge killings, as lower-level chieftains settle accounts.

The bodies found — bound, gagged and encased in 66-gallon oil drums — showed signs of torture, according to the Guerrero State attorney general's office. Officials there said the victims' fingernails had been ripped out and that their bodies were covered with burn marks. Two had been strangled with cables that were still wrapped around their necks, while the third had been shot, they said.

The mystery surrounding the affair deepened further, as Mexico's federal drug agency director raised extraordinary new questions about the death of Carrillo, alleging that the two doctors whose bodies have been identified killed the drug lord intentionally. Mariano Herran Salvatti said that the discovery of the bodies — only five days after he said his agency had issued arrest warrants for them — means that his agency is closing its investigation into Carrillo's death.

Cutting off aggressive questions from reporters, Herran provided no evidence to support his assertion that the physicians intended to kill the drug lord, nor could he explain why the arrest warrants were issued two weeks after the men were reported missing by their families.

Although details of the killings were particularly gruesome, the discovery of the bodies in their concrete tombs came as no surprise to most Mexicans.

Mexican authorities had said initially that all of the doctors involved in Carrillo's surgery had gone into hiding, with the exception of one who some officials said was in police custody. But the family of Jaime Godoy Singh, 37 — identified at the time of Carrillo's death as one of the doctors involved in the surgery — said that Godoy had remained in Mexico City, where he was a prominent ear, nose and throat specialist.

It was not until October 17, the family said — more than three months after Carrillo's death — that Godoy actually disappeared and they reported him missing, along with two of his associates. Last week, Godoy's father heard radio reports that the three bodies had been found in cement-filled drums beside a highway in Guerrero State between Mexico City and Acapulco, and he telephoned police, expressing suspicion that one of the bodies might be that of his missing son.

The father and a brother of the missing physician went to the morgue in Iguala, about 70 miles south of Mexico City, where police handed them photos of the mutilated bodies. The father became ill and was taken to a hospital, but the brother identified one body as that of his brother based on a dental prosthesis he knew Godoy wore.

He also reportedly identified one of the other bodies as Ricardo Reyes Rincon, a Colombian doctor who was said to have taken part in Carrillo's surgery. Drug chief Herran said that investigators believe the second body is that of Reyes but that they have not completed their examination of the body. Reyes was a close associate of Carrillo and a high-ranking member of the drug network, according to documents filed in a U.S. court case in New York.

Roberto Godoy Singh (centre), brother of slain surgeon Jaime Godoy, being quizzed by reporters last week

U.S. in Secret Deal to Buy MiG Fighters

Bradley Graham

THE United States secretly purchased 21 advanced fighter jets last month from the former Soviet republic of Moldova in what Pentagon officials disclosed last week was a move to deny sale of the aircraft to Iran and keep pieces of the old Soviet nuclear arsenal off the open market.

Many of the high-performance MiG-29 aircraft are capable of delivering nuclear weapons, the officials said. Moldova informed U.S. authorities that Iran had expressed interest in buying the aircraft and even had sent inspectors to look over the planes.

Over the past few weeks, U.S. crews partially dismantled the jets in Moldova and flew the components in giant U.S. Air Force C-17 transport planes to an Air Force base near Dayton, Ohio, where they are to be reassembled.

"We're taking them out of the hands of those who otherwise might acquire them," Defense Secretary William S. Cohen told a news conference at the Pentagon. "We will obviously study the aircraft for our own, you know, national security purposes, because . . . this type of aircraft could very well end up in the hands of other rogue nations."

While the United States had acquired MiGs in the past, 14 of the Moldovan planes are more modern "C" models not previously in the American inventory, nor in Iran's, defense officials said. Six are "A" models, and one is a "B" model trainer.

In addition to the aircraft, the sale included delivery of more than 500 Soviet-made, air-to-air missiles, none nuclear. Moldova has no atomic weapons.

The deal marked the second reported time since the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 that the United States has sought to thwart the threat of nuclear terrorism by buying and spiriting away assets once belonging to the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Three years ago, U.S. nuclear engineers and military personnel were dispatched to Kazakhstan to take from a poorly guarded warehouse enough highly enriched uranium to manufacture 25 nuclear weapons.

Terms of the sale require the U.S. and Moldovan governments to keep the price confidential, but U.S. authorities last week could not hide their enthusiasm for the relatively low price they paid. Several sources familiar with the details said the cash to be transferred from the United States to Moldova is less than $50 million for all the planes, although the deal includes other forms of compensation, officials said.

"We are going to be in position to assist Moldova," Cohen said, citing the likely prospect of increased humanitarian aid and the probable delivery of used American military equipment from excess stockpiles. Cohen commended the leaders of Moldova for their "visionary approach" and said the agreement "contributes to the enhanced climate of trust in relations between Moldova and the United States."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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China's Huge Dam Drowns Out Dissent

Steven Mufson in Sandouping

HERE AT what was once a scenic but treacherous bend in the first of the Yangtze River's legendary Three Gorges, the Chinese government inched closer last weekend to realizing a vision that combines ambition worthy of pyramid-building Pharaohs with the destructiveness of open pit-coal mining.

As China's President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng watched through binoculars from a temporary reviewing stand on a gash in the ravaged shoreline, teams of drivers — most behind the wheels of giant Caterpillar dump trucks — pitched load after load of granite boulders into the voracious water to complete a man-made barrier and block the Yangtze's main channel.

The plugging of the world's third-longest river at its steepest and most perilous point marked a major — and some critics fear irreversible — step forward in the construction of the controversial Three Gorges Dam. The hydropower project, which will be the world's largest, is expected to cost at least $29 billion, tower 610 feet over the current river surface, span 6,600 feet and create a reservoir that will force more than 1.2 million people from their homes.

National television broadcast live the final stage in building the temporary barrier that will shield the dam work site from the river, a task that makes the parting of the Red Sea simple by comparison.

For six and a half hours, a procession of oversized earth movers — 118 per hour — dropped 45-ton and 77-ton loads of rock and gravel into a 33-foot gap in the barrier. When the pool of water below the barrier grew still and the river above turned to join the water flowing through a temporary diversion channel, fireworks went off, ship horns blared, cheers went up from thousands of spectators on the shoreline and the brass band from the Navy's engineering institute struck up "Song for the Motherland."

Jiang hailed the event as "a remarkable feat in the history of mankind to reshape and exploit natural resources" and said it "embodies the great industrious and dauntless spirit of the Chinese nation." And though Li didn't make a speech, the day marked a victory for the premier, a Soviet-trained hydrologic engineer who has championed the dam project for more than a decade.


Boulders are dropped into the Yangtze in a project that will forcibly move 1.2 million people PHOTO ROBYN BECK

Despite last Saturday's milestone, the wisdom of building the dam remains the subject of debate. When it is completed in 2009, Three Gorges will generate 18,200 megawatts of power, 50 percent more than South America's Itaipu dam, which is currently the largest in the world.

In the United States, the Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River in Washington state generates 6,800 megawatts of power.

The Three Gorges dam project will form a reservoir 412 miles long and inundate an area seven times the size of the District of Columbia. The reservoir will bury 13 cities, 140 towns, 1,352 villages and about 650 factories. It will raise the water level by 577 feet, submerging hundreds of ancient archaeological sites and much of the base of the granite and limestone cliffs that line the gorges and are among China's greatest tourist attractions.

The dam's supporters call it a triumph of human determination and ingenuity, crucial for controlling lethal floods and generating clean, much-needed energy for China's populous Yangtze River valley, where a third of China's 1.2 billion people live. Whereas trackers on the river banks once strained on ropes to help boats up the river, the dam will enable oceangoing ships to travel 1,500 miles inland to the city of Chongqing.

Citing floods that have killed tens of thousands of people in the Yangtze River valley three times this century, Guo Shuyang, an official of the Three Gorges Project, said, "we will spend big money to solve big problems."

Critics, however, call the dam a mammoth folly, a triumph of human ego and political showmanship over reason, and an environmental catastrophe that will neither stop floods nor solve the region's development problems. Moreover, some hydrologists say the Yangtze's heavy load of sediment and its shifting floor of gravel will hamper the dam's turbines, fill the bottom of the reservoir and cause even worse flooding.

"The Three Gorges Project is not a hydro-electric engineering project. It is a political project exhibiting all the characteristics of a centrally controlled socialist economic system," said Dai Qing, a journalist and leading critic of the dam. Charging that the government has suppressed negative information about the project, Dai said, "there is no freedom to express opposition to this project in China."

Amid the controversy, one thing is certain: the dam is big. A mountain has been reduced to rubble to make way for ship locks. Workers look like ants from the nearby road as dump trucks rumble by, carrying rocky soil away.

Work on the dam has proceeded quickly, which critics say is an attempt by Li Peng to bring the project to a point of no return before his term expires next March. Now that the river has been blocked, project managers here say they are in another race: to build up the temporary dam and beat the spring rains.

Throughout the Communist era, the government has mooted dissenting views on the dam. In 1958, after Mao ended the brief liberal Hundred Flowers period, engineers who had criticized the Three Gorges dam project were publicly criticized and sent to labor camps. During spring 1989, when student-led protesters rallied in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, Dai published Yangtze, Yangtze, a book of essays opposing the project. After the crackdown on protesters, Dai was jailed for 10 months and the book was banned.

Women on Brief Visit From Korea

Kevin Sullivan in Tokyo

FIFTEEN Japanese-born women who live in North Korea returned to Japan last weekend for the first time in decades in a carefully choreographed event that both countries hope will lead to better relations.

Most of the women, who range in age from 55 to 83, married Korean men before or during World War II, when the Korean Peninsula was occupied by Japan. Many of them lived in Japan after the war and moved back to North Korea in a repatriation program that began in 1959. They have not been permitted to leave the closed Stalinist nation since.

North Korea, a country in severe economic distress that desperately needs international aid to help feed its hungry people, recently relented to years of Japanese pleas and allowed the 15 women to make the week-long trip. No one knows how many of the 1,800 Japanese women who returned to North Korea are still alive, but most estimates say it is probably about 600.

When the group arrived via Beijing, there were hugs, kisses and tearful reunions with their families at Tokyo's Narita Airport. The last time many of these relatives saw each other, they were young and vibrant; today, many are old and frail, barely recognizable from yellowed family photos.

The reunited families were genuinely elated, but most analysts said the subtext of the warm scenes is political calculation.

North Korea needs food and money; Japan has both. But Tokyo has been reluctant to offer Pyongyang much assistance because of concerns over North Korea's refusal to allow the wives to visit their families in Japan, and because of allegations that North Korean agents kidnapped several Japanese citizens in the 1970s.

To quell those concerns, the North Korean government is allowing the women to visit. Analysts said the women have been chosen for their public relations value. They said the women likely have been prepped about what to say here, and they or their families in North Korea probably face severe punishment if they defect or say anything critical of North Korea.

Before the wives left Pyongyang, they bowed and laid flowers at a memorial to North Korean state founder Kim Il Sung. Then, in a news conference in Beijing, they spoke glowingly of Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il.

Despite its reservations about North Korea's policies and behavior, Japan also wants to improve ties. The regime of Kim Jong Il, which controls a million-man military, is the most immediate threat to security in East Asia. Its missiles can reach parts of Japan, and any military clash on the Korean Peninsula inevitably would involve Tokyo in a supporting role for U.S. troops.

Clinton Equates Gay and Civil Rights

Peter Baker

A HALF-CENTURY after President Harry S. Truman declared his commitment to civil rights before a largely black crowd gathered at Washington's Lincoln Memorial, President Clinton last Saturday promised a similar crusade on behalf of equal rights for gay and lesbian Americans.

In the first speech by a sitting president to a gay rights organization, Clinton consciously echoed Truman's historic remarks to the NAACP in June 1947, which was the first time a president had addressed a black civil rights organization. Truman that day vowed his support for equality for all Americans. "And when I say all Americans," Truman said, "I mean all Americans."

"Well, my friends," Clinton said, "all Americans still means all Americans."

By equating the gay rights movement with the struggle for racial equality, Clinton risked igniting a backlash among conservatives and among some African American leaders who resent the comparison. The matter was so sensitive that it was the subject of some internal debate at the White House. Some of the president's senior aides said privately just before Clinton's arrival that the Clinton had opted to take out the Truman reference to avoid sending the wrong signal, a decision he apparently reversed at the last minute.

Clinton has long embraced much of the gay rights agenda, however, his speech to a $300,000 fund-raiser sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign was seen as historic not so much for the sentiments it expressed but for the simple fact of its delivery.

The longest and most sustained of numerous standing ovations came as the president vowed to continue lobbying for passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would bar workplace bias based on sexual orientation.

"Being gay, the last time I thought about it, seemed to have nothing to do with the ability to read a balance book, set a broken bone or change a sparkplug," Clinton said to wild applause. Firing or refusing to hire people because they are gay is akin to discriminating based on race, religion or gender, he added. "It is wrong and it should be illegal."

Yet despite the enthusiastic response he received, the president's speech avoided stronger language that some aides and activists hoped he would use.

Outside the Grand Hyatt Hotel, scattered protesters made their contrary views known. AIDS activists held signs saying "Expose Clinton." On another corner was a small cluster of people holding signs saying "God Hates Fags." And on a third corner was another group of conservatives who oppose homosexuality but rejected what they considered a hateful approach.

Inside the ballroom, three AIDS activists interrupted Clinton's speech with shouting. "People with AIDS are dying," one screamed.

The audience immediately cheered Clinton, who responded, "Wait, wait, wait. I'd have been disappointed if you hadn't been here tonight. People with AIDS are dying. But since I became president, we're spending 10 times as much on research."

While Clinton raised the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which failed in the Senate last year 50 to 49, he did not mention another bill he signed, the Defense of Marriage Act aimed at preventing the legalization of same-sex unions.

Organizers of the $250-a-plate, black-tie dinner chose to overlook that as well, praising Clinton as the first president to embrace gay rights and politely calling on him to do more.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
November 16 1997

Internet Term-Papers Dog Colleges

Rene Sanchez

BETH BOOKWALTER wanted a term paper — fast — so she roamed the Internet in search of help. It wasn't hard to find. She reached eight companies through their Web sites, paid fees ranging from $45 to $175, and within days had what she was looking for, a report on a Toni Morrison novel.

But Bookwalter was not just another desperate, procrastinating college student. She was working undercover for Boston University. And the evidence she gathered about the flourishing online term-paper industry is now part of an extraordinary lawsuit that has captured the attention of campuses across the nation.

Late last month, Boston University took legal action against the companies it duped into selling material to Bookwalter, charging them in federal court with wire fraud, mail fraud, racketeering and violating a Massachusetts law that bans the sale of term papers. The university wants to stop the companies from ever doing business in the state and is demanding that all of their documents be seized.

Higher education officials say the lawsuit is the most dramatic step a university has taken to crack down on fake term papers. That issue is as old as most colleges, but the size of the marketplace emerging on the Internet and the quick, easy availability of papers there are presenting serious new headaches across academia.

There are now so many Internet sites enticing students with papers that college officials can hardly keep count of them.

"The whole issue is changing dramatically," said Sheila Trice Bell, executive director of the National Association of College and University Attorneys, whose members are closely watching the Boston case. "We may have a big problem on our hands."

The days of lazy college students rummaging through fraternity houses for files of musty old term papers, or relying on back-page ads in magazines such as Rolling Stone, are long gone. On the Internet, students have an astounding array of cheating choices.

From coast to coast, term-paper companies now operate around the clock, boast thousands of easy-to-download papers, and often promise customers good grades. Some companies are merely lone operators who buy and sell papers. Others pay a loose collection of students or adults to write customized reports for clients.

Rates for papers vary, and at times exceed $35 per page. On some Web sites, students can get access to a paper just by typing their credit card numbers onto a computer screen. Other services charge subscription fees and allow students to browse through a computer library of reports. A few charge nothing — they simply gather essays that students already have turned in for a class, then post them for anyone to read.

Most sites are not subtle. There's the Evil House of Cheat, Genius Papers and School Sucks. One site even claims to have all of its papers written by Harvard students.

"It has definitely become a much bigger industry," said Kenny Sahr, a 26-year-old in Houston who runs the School Sucks Web site. "So many students are desperate, and this allows them to do much more impulse buying."

Sahr launched his business last year. He has collected more than 2,500 term papers from students and he posts them for others to read for free. He makes money by selling space on his site to advertisers, including other term-paper mills.

On the site, Sahr reminds students that professors are also checking his inventory and sharing their detective work — via the Internet — with college faculties around the country. But he said many students pay no attention to the warnings.

Some of them have begged him to take a paper off-line for a few days, in an attempt to fool a suspicious professor.

"It's pathetic," he said. "Many of these papers are garbage, actually. If I spell-checked them, we'd have a new president by the time I finished."

On Boston University's campus, students are debating how extensive term-paper fraud has become. Some say only a few of their classmates use the papers for anything more than ideas. To others, the lawsuit has exposed a problem.

"I can see how students could be more tempted now," said Melissa Morris, a junior. "This is quick and affordable, and grades are so important. But these papers are so bad. Anybody with one night to cram in a library can do better than this."

Many of the term-paper companies tell students to use their material only as a resource for their own work. But college officials say those disclaimers are a joke.

Boston University contends that none of the companies called by Bookwalter, a law student at the school, declined to send her a paper even after she made it clear she would turn it in under false pretenses. Some sent a paper tailored to her exact specifications.

"Give me a break — these companies know what they're doing," said Robert Smith, counsel to Boston University. "This is a serious issue of academic integrity. It's getting ridiculous. You can practically pay for your homework on the Internet now."

Some colleges are worried about more than fake term papers; Web sites now offer admissions essays to high school students.

Citizenship Issue Divides Germans

William Drozdiak in Berlin

A CONTROVERSY over whether Germany should offer dual nationality to children born here of Turkish and other immigrants has intensified debate about German identity and threatened to split Chancellor Helmut Kohl's governing coalition.

As the only major Western nation that bases citizenship on bloodlines, Germany is confronting renewed social and political pressure to accommodate a new generation of foreign offspring who are rebelling against discriminatory treatment that prevents them from integrating into the society where they were born and raised.

Younger politicians from Kohl's Christian Democratic party and its junior partner, the Free Democrats, have joined opposition Social Democrats and Greens party members to demand changes in citizenship laws dating from a 1913 imperial decree. But they have been blocked by Kohl and other elderly conservatives who insist Germany must preserve its character as "a bastion of Christian civilization."

The proponents of change support granting the offspring of foreigners dual nationality at birth with the possibility of choosing their citizenship at the age of 18.

At a recent gathering of the Christian Democratic youth wing, Kohl insisted that changing the laws to allow dual nationality would open the floodgates to millions of immigrants who would distort the identity of the German nation. He said the number of Turks in Germany would more than double to 6 million, stirring criticism that Kohl was fanning the flames of xenophobia.

"I find it absolutely incomprehensible that the chancellor is taking such a strong stand against dual citizenship," said Hakki Keskin, president of the Turkish ethnic community. "With his comments, Kohl is reinforcing prejudices against Turks living in Germany."

Guido Westerwelle, general secretary of the Free Democrats, a junior partner in Kohl's ruling coalition, accused Kohl of making "misleading and factually inaccurate statements" about the impact of the proposed reforms. He noted that other European countries did not have a huge influx of foreigners when they made it easier for them to become citizens.

He said the Free Democrats believe integrating foreigners into German society is one of the country's biggest challenges and must become a top priority of the government.

Germany is host to a greater number of immigrants than any other country in Europe. More than 7 million foreigners, or 9 percent of the population, have settled here and started to transform the country — against the wishes of its political leaders — into a multicultural society. They include Russian Jews, Bosnian war refugees and more than 2 million Turks who, in cities such as Cologne and Frankfurt, account for nearly half the residents.

German law grants automatic citizenship to those of German parentage, but makes it extremely difficult for foreigners and their children to acquire a German passport even if they were born and raised in the country.

As a result, there are second- and third-generation ethnic Turks officially categorized as "foreign fellow citizens" even though their parents or grandparents arrived here four decades ago in the first wave of "guest workers" to plug the labor shortage during Germany's postwar economic boom.

Even though most Turks here cannot vote, they have emerged in recent years as a significant economic force. They no longer are confined to manual labor jobs in the steel, coal and construction industries, but have branched out and started to flourish as doctors, lawyers and businessmen with financial clout.

Faruk Sen, director of the Center for Turkish Studies in Essen, said there are about 42,000 Turkish-run enterprises in Germany that earn more than $20 billion in annual revenues. The Turkish community has an estimated purchasing power of $30 billion.

Sen said many ethnic Turks who grew up in Germany resent the second-class status that prevents them from exercising political rights. They pay hefty taxes, but cannot vote and find it difficult to gain entry into the civil service or universities.

"They often know no other country except Germany and have no real connections to the land of their parents and grandparents, yet they feel alienated in the very place where they have grown up," Sen said.

"We are talking about children whose parents have permanent residence here and who want to make Germany their home," said Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, the government's top official in charge of foreigners' affairs who openly contests Kohl's thinking about immigrants. "It is not just a legal issue, but a psychological one, because these children feel that they do not belong."

Haunting Loneliness of Gay Life in the Fast Lane

Bruce Bawer

THE FAREWELL SYMPHONY
By Edmund White
Knopf. 413 pp. $25.

HE BEGAN his literary career as the very model of the novelist as creator of austere, impersonal "made objects"; he has ended up as one of America's premier practitioners of the novel as forthright personal confession. Edmund White's first two novels, the taut, enigmatic, visionary Forgetting Elena (1973) and Nocturnes For The King Of Naples (1978), don't even look as if they were composed by the same man who wrote A Boy's Own Story (1982), the plainly autobiographical and erotically frank account of a gay teenager's sexual awakening, whose form is as familiar as its content was (in 1982, anyway) explosive.

Indeed, it could be argued that A Boy's Own Story has less in common with White's earlier novels than with his first two nonfiction works, The Joy Of Gay Sex (1977), a how-to guide written in collaboration with Charles Silverstein, and States Of Desire: Travels In Gay America (1980), which relates White's cross-country sybaritic exploits. Both books, with their easy equation of male homosexuality and promiscuity and their mockery of monogamous gay couples, were disastrously timed: Soon after the appearance of States Of Desire, men



White: He paints a brutal portrait of friends PHOTO: DAVID SILLITOE

who led the kind of no-holds-barred sex lives extolled in its pages had begun to die of AIDS. The author of these books is essentially the White of A Boy's Own Story and its sequels, in all of which sex remains constantly at center stage.

The first of those sequels, The Beautiful Room Is Empty, appeared in 1988. It has now been succeeded by The Farewell Symphony, which White's publisher describes as "the final volume of his autobiographical trilogy." It is a curious book. On the one hand, it feels far less like a novel than do the trilogy's first two volumes. On the other, White's seemingly more assured embrace of the memoir form is part of what makes this book far more artistically satisfying than its predecessors.

The Farewell Symphony takes us from the 1960s to the height of the AIDS crisis, and shuttles us back and forth between New York and Paris (the two cities in which White has lived most of his adult life), all the while chronicling the narrator's handful of passionate loves, his several long-standing (mostly literary) friendships, and his countless one-night stands. Among the friends are characters obviously based on Alfred Corn, J. D. McClatchy, Howard Moss and other noted writers, alive and dead, who are or were part of White's social circle. White portrays some of these men so brutally that one wonders whether he has decided to settle scores here with deceased friends and to drive living ones out of his life once and for all.

White seems especially to enjoy tweaking gay men whom he considers effete and pretentious. At one point, for example, the narrator visits a "twittery old man," obviously the late novelist Glenway Wescott, who explains why gay novelists should not write about gay life: "It spoils everything if our . . . our Athenian pleasures are described to the barbarians. I think our world is amusing only so long as it remains a mystery to them."

White's narrator spends less time among these upper-crust characters, however, than among the men he picks up. To White's credit, his portrait of a coarse, illiterate hulk whom the narrator couples with behind a parked truck is every bit as rich as — and decidedly more respectful than — his portraits of Wescott and Merrill; indeed, the pillow talk of the narrator's unlettered, unpretentious sex partners is rendered as vividly and credibly as that of any of his belletristic chums.

The book's title is borrowed from that of a Haydn symphony in which, White notes, "more and more of the musicians get up to leave the stage, blowing out their candles as they go. In the end one violinist is still playing." An apt image for a book in whose last quarter several of the characters die of AIDS. Yet this book is about life, not death. And, poignantly, it's about aging: "In the past I'd received fan letters asking me for sex; now the letters asked me for advice on how to find a young lover."

A friend of mine never refers to The Beautiful Room Is Empty by its real title but instead mockingly calls it "The Beautiful Book Is Empty" — the point being that White's narrative, though elegant, doesn't add up to anything. This is, to an extent, also a problem with The Farewell Symphony, which recounts a great deal of experience yet offers relatively little mature reflection on its meaning. Yet it is, in the end, something more than a series of lubricious anecdotes signifying nothing. The book has a point, a purpose — and one that strongly recalls another recent gay novel, Andrew Holleran's The Beauty Of Men.

Both books are sumptuously written, low on plot, and full of matter-of-fact anecdotes about anonymous couplings in public places; both hold one's attention with their rich, affecting portraits of manifestly autobiographical narrators. Holleran's book depicts an aging gay man who led a glamorous life in 1970s Manhattan and is now terrifyingly alone in rural Florida; in White's book, an obscure editorial drone with a busy sex life becomes a celebrated HIV-positive author who lives alone and largely in the past. Both books paint a haunting picture of loneliness at the end of the gay fast lane. White, who like Holleran was once widely seen as a prophet of gay sexual liberation, has now written, like Holleran, a beautiful book which, intentionally or not, mounts a powerful critique of the lifestyle both men once eulogized.

ILLUSTRATION: CHRISTOPHE

Paths to Global Hegemony

Alan Tonelson

THE GRAND CHESSBOARD
American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives
By Zbigniew Brzezinski
Basic Books. 223 pp. $26.

AMERICANS, the original New Agers of world affairs, generally have never been comfortable with geopolitics. Basing foreign policy on such uninspiring and unsentimental considerations as power, location and topography has always been scorned as a gratuitous perversion of European princes, not a bedrock necessity in a dangerous, anarchic world. Hence the eccentricities of the best-known American geostrategists — at least during the 20th century — from Theodore Roosevelt, who viewed foreign policy largely as an opportunity for Americans to prove their virility, to Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, who dangerously weakened the U.S. military and tore apart American society by prolonging the pursuit of credibility in strategically marginal Vietnam.

The Grand Chessboard, by Jimmy Carter's former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, carries on the national tradition of dubious globe-twirling. This blueprint for post-Cold War American leadership is dotted with insightful historical observations and informative sketches of numerous countries new and old (especially those of energy-rich, formerly Soviet Central Asia). It also offers some refreshingly pragmatic (though incomplete) proposals for dealing with the rise of China as a global power.

Yet Brzezinski's analysis is continually marred by an insistence on treating as already settled precisely those questions that a true geostrategist would recognize remain wide open in the Cold War's confusing aftermath. In fact, although the author depicts his geostrategy as the embodiment of coolly analytical rationality, it is often just as indiscriminate and even utopian as today's wheezing version of 20th-century American internationalism.

The grand chessboard Brzezinski writes of is Eurasia. For decades, strategists have held that domination of the global "heartland" would mean world supremacy for aggressors and big trouble for countries on the "periphery," like the United States. More narrowly, as far back as the Napoleonic era, Thomas Jefferson feared the power of Europe under one master. And today, Eurasia's importance has led President Clinton to keep intact America's main security alliances in Europe and to expand NATO into Eastern Europe and possibly beyond.

Thus Brzezinski seems on solid — if not especially original — ground in arguing that "the issue of . . . whether it prevents the emergence of a dominant and antagonistic Eurasian power . . . remains central to America's capacity to exercise global primacy." And it would logically follow that America's key foreign policy objective is creating "a stable continental equilibrium, with the United States as the political arbiter." In this context, it is even sensible to propose aiming ultimately to create "a truly cooperative global community" starting with a NATO-like "Trans-Eurasian Security System" that would include "a confederated Russia," a reasonably non-imperialistic China, Japan and India.

Yet this geostrategic analysis leaves out a lot of geography. Unquestionably, any power that controls Eurasia's vast natural resources and human talents would quickly turn Britain, Japan, India, Southeast Asia and other islands and appendages into vassals or at best client states. Nearly as calamitous for these countries — and much likelier in the foreseeable future — would be Eurasia's disintegration into wars among would-be conquerors and their targets, or the spread of disorder from one failed state to another, and even into more stable but economically fragile regions like Western Europe. This is exactly why the diplomatic history of all major European and Asian countries until the end of World War II has been a tale of ceaseless war and maneuver, hegemony or subjugation.

Brzezinski would keep America on much the same course — to be sure, emphasizing maneuver, not war. In fact, he is calling for the greatest burst of diplomatic acti[vity] in U.S. history. But although de[fus]ing tensions in the world's expl[osive] heartland is obviously in Ame[rica's] interest, this challenge pre[sents] U.S. leaders with a set of cr[itical] questions that Brzezinski c[om]pletely ignores.

After all, the United States is [not] obviously comparable geopoliti[cally] to Britain or Japan. If the West[ern] Hemisphere that America d[omi]nates is technically an island, it [is an] awfully big one, and the Un[ited] States itself is a continent-sized [...] protected from conventional [and] nuclear attack by broad ocea[ns and] the world's largest deterrent for[ce].

As a result, the United St[ates] might enjoy options in Eurasi[a and] the world at large that most o[ther] countries don't have. It may w[ell be] that the safest, most efficient wa[y to] ensure national security and p[ros]perity is to plunge ever deeper [into] the foreign and domestic affai[rs of] countries and regions we e[...] know little about, or that are cha[ng]ing rapidly before our eyes. It [may] also be prudent over the long ru[n to] devote major resources to achie[ving] a historically unprecedented tr[ans]formation of world politics.

BUT IT is also entirely poss[ible] that the advantages Ameri[ca] already enjoys argue m[ore] convincingly for a wholly diffe[rent] approach — enhancing rel[ative] power and self-reliance, minimiz[ing] vulnerabilities, and ... muddl[ing] through international difficulties [as] they arise. Such a minimalist str[at]egy, moreover, looks especially [at]tractive given Brzezinski's repea[ted] acknowledgments of his bluepri[nt's] excruciating degree of difficulty.

The greatest shortcoming of The Grand Chessboard is that it pr[e]vents readers from thinking ab[out] these choices for themselves by ne[]glecting to deal with cost, risk, fea[si]bility and tradeoffs. With the Col[d] War now over, these are the ver[y] issues around which our stro[ng,] wealthy, highly secure nation's fo[r]eign policy debate are now qu[ite] properly revolving. Its failure to ri[g]orously examine these admitted[ly] subjective but unavoidable cons[id]erations leaves The Grand Ches[s]board preaching to a stead[ily] shrinking establishment choir.

Private schools are keen to work with the Government to try to raise standards, writes **Donald McLeod**

Learning curve

INDEPENDENT school heads in Britain held their first annual conference under a Labour government for 18 years in the gratifying knowledge that ministers were actually seeking their advice about how to raise standards.

This was change indeed from a party that at the 1983 election was pledged to abolish their schools. Old Labour dropped that idea, though it continued to regard the private sector in education with frosty distaste. But as the members of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) gathered in Brighton a couple of days after the Labour party conference last month the thaw in relations had almost reached the point of a new spring.

The ending of the Assisted Places Scheme provoked protests, but most independent heads realised that as a manifesto pledge it was going to happen and they are now keen to explore the possibilities of partnership with Labour. At the back of their minds is the implied threat of the review of charitable status and the message from ministers that they must earn it.

Good relations with the new Government are not just reassuring for the home market — British schools have turned with increasing success to recruiting overseas pupils to fill their boarding places. Eastern Europe has proved a particularly fertile area since the collapse of communism, while Hong Kong, Singapore and the East Asia have provided growing numbers.

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, has been talking to the HMC, which represents the most prestigious of the boys and co-educational schools in the independent sector, the Girls' Schools Association (GSA) and the preparatory schools body, as well as to individuals such as Martin Stephen, the high master of Manchester Grammar School. Mr Byers is keen to foster a new partnership with independent schools. "We haven't got any definite proposals, we are just feeling our way, but I think the whole relationship could be managed with a bit more imagination than in the past."

The upshot of forthcoming discussions between the Government and the independent schools will be announced this month, probably at the GSA conference. The partnership could go further than using schools as a specialist resource.

"These schools are highly successful. In terms of our own standards agenda we want to see if there are things we might learn from the independent sector," said Mr Byers.

"Of course they are taking youngsters from backgrounds with lots of parental support, but they may be doing things that are working well that we might use in the state sector," he added.



Stripes and stars . . . Ministers admire successful independent schools PHOTOGRAPH: PETER LOMAS

Dulwich College, in London, and King Edward's School, in Birmingham, co-operated with the Flying Start literacy summer schools. Dr Stephen wants schools like Manchester Grammar to offer subjects such as Classics or Russian to pupils from local state schools in return for the equivalent state funding, say £3,600 a year. He also proposes his school could coach likely Oxbridge entrants from the local community. With Newcastle Royal Grammar School, Dr Stephen has also told Tony Blair and Mr Byers of a proposed pilot scheme to develop a four-year MSc degree aimed at high-flyers with the first year taken in the sixth form.

Whatever the promised partnership with Mr Blair's government turns out to mean in practice, the independent schools have been pleasantly surprised at the warmth of his ministers' language. It was not just the manifesto pledge to build bridges across educational divides and end educational apartheid, but the government white paper's positive mention of boarding that has encouraged the independents. "There have been more warm things said about boarding schools in the four or five months of this Government than 18 years of the last one," was one comment on the eve of the HMC conference.

Schools could offer flexible boarding for children who needed this kind of environment at a particular time, David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, told the student magazine Isis. "There are children who need residential schooling for shorter or longer-term reasons, and it may be that independent schools with their tradition of boarding can offer this to children at state schools."

Michael Kirk, secretary of the Boarding Schools Association, is enthusiastic about closer co-operation to help children with home difficulties. Local authorities used to send children to boarding schools, he pointed out. "We have had lots of cases of children going to boarding school who would have had a very difficult time at home."

Boarding has been in steady decline for years and any extra pupils — and funding — would be welcome. But prestigious boarding schools, already coping with the threat of drugs and the effects of family break-up on their students, are not going to take in delinquents. Parents would be nervous if the school character they are paying for was threatened or diluted.

CAN HE TALK SENSE BUT NOT 'GET IT' ON PAPER?

DYSLEXIA

DYSLEXIC CHILDREN – THE SIGNS

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Often	- Slow writing and use of restricted vocabulary of small words. cannot spell longer words.
Sometimes	- reversed, rotated or twisted letters when writing.
Sometimes	- clumsiness, left-handedness, difficulty in telling left from right.
Sometimes	- a family history of learning difficulties
Sometimes	- difficulty in learning lists and labels in the right order
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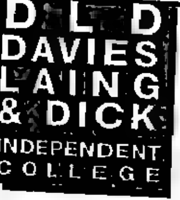
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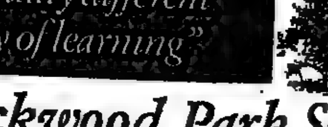
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Jordan's parliamentary elections this month will do nothing to halt the killing of women in the name of family honour. **Julian Borger** reports from Amman

In cold blood

ONE MORNING this summer, Rania Arafat's two aunts came to take her for a walk. They told their 21-year-old niece they had arranged a secret meeting with her boyfriend. She strolled with them through Gweismeh, a poor suburb where Amman's concrete sprawl peters out into desert. When the three women reached a patch of open land, the aunts suddenly stepped aside, leaving Arafat standing alone. She was shot four times in the back of the head at close range and once in the forehead. The gunman was her 17-year-old brother, Rami.

It was a typical "honour killing" by relatives seeking to cleanse the family name of some perceived shame. Arafat's crime was to refuse an arranged marriage and elope with her Iraqi boyfriend. Rami is in jail, but is unlikely to be sentenced to more than a few months, especially as he is a minor, which is almost certainly why he was given the role of executioner.

"Honour killings" are on the rise. There have been three in Jordan in recent weeks, 21 so far this year — already two more than last year. It is not known how many such murders are recorded as suicides or accidents.

The fear of summary execution hangs over thousands of women who risk being denounced for some sexual transgression. But in the campaign for last week's parliamentary elections, the laws that condone the murders were not an issue. Even the 17 women among the 540 candidates standing were reluctant to break the taboo. One, Wisaf Ka'abneh, says: "This is our tradition. We do not want to encourage women who break up the family."

When Arafat's body was brought to Amman's Al-Bashir hospital on July 19, the pathologists recognised her. They had seen her two weeks earlier, alive but terrified. As is customary in cases where a girl has left home against her parents' wishes, the police wanted her examined to determine whether she was still a virgin. Doctors were bound by law to carry out the test, but they knew that, whatever the result, Arafat was in danger.

Dr Mu'men Hadidi, director of the National Institute of Forensic Medicine, says half the women who end up on his mortuary slab have already been sent to the Institute for their hymen to be examined. "It's a very ugly thing. Our report is not made public — it's for the police. But the parents dig down. Whether or not it proves she's a virgin, it will not change the image in their minds."

Dr Hadidi has had enough of inspecting young women on their way to their deaths. He recently appeared on Jordanian television to say so, shocking many viewers who had been unaware of or unconcerned with the practice. Hadidi and a small group of doctors, social workers and lawyers are lobbying for the creation of a public committee to tackle the problem.


Students in Amman, where women still lead restricted lives

According to Rana Husseini, the only Jordanian journalist to report regularly on the "honour killings", 40 out of 153 inmates at Amman's women's prison are in "protective custody". Many have been incarcerated for years. In several cases, the jailed women had been raped but were nevertheless seen by their family as a source of dishonour.

After Rania Arafat was tracked down in her lover's flat, she was brought to court and, as her family looked on from the public bench, offered the option of protective custody. She broke down in tears and her father was allowed to speak for her. He said she would return to her cousin, her intended husband, and all would be forgiven. He had even written her a passionate letter, saying: "I am singing from a father's heart, that is bleeding tears and blood over your absence . . . Come home and God will forgive. I will do whatever you wish." He signed a legal document guaranteeing his daughter's life and she was sent home. Four days later, she was dead.

Like Arafat, most "honour killing" victims come from the back streets of poor neighbourhoods in which tribal tradition prevails. But the killings are excused by law. Article 340 of the criminal code states: "A husband or a close blood relative who kills a woman caught in a situation highly suspicious of adultery will be totally exempt from sentence." And if a man kills a female relative suspected of involvement in "an illicit liaison" (not necessarily consummated), he will get a reduced sentence under article 98 of the code. That allows mitigation for "crimes of passion" if the victim committed an "act which is illicit in the eyes of the perpetrator". In practice, once a murder has been judged an "honour killing", the usual sentence is from three months to a year.

Ironically, Jordan's "honour killing" laws are the result of Western influence in the Middle East. According to Asma Khader's research, they arose out of a fusion between Egyptian tribal custom and the Napoleonic Code in 1810, after the French legions took Cairo. The laws were copied by Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan.

The Jordanian Women's Union petitioned parliament in March to change the laws, to no avail. Last week's elections are likely to put a solution still further out of reach. Changes in the electoral law, strict press restrictions and an opposition boycott combined to produce a conservative parliament dominated by tribal elders. In return, King Hussein expects their support for Jordan's increasingly unpopular peace agreement with Israel.

"Women are losing their social rights as part of a political deal with fundamentalist conservative groups," Khader says. She has been questioned by internal security officers for presenting a "negative image of Jordan" with her campaign against "honour killings".

A government official who claims to be a moderniser bemoans the continuation of "honour killings" but complains: "There are some things on which the tribal leaders will not negotiate. And this is definitely one of them."

CLASSIFIED

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HOTELS & APARTMENTS

PERSONAL

PERSONAL

Letter from Bamako Robert Lacville

Medicine man

WIDOWHOOD is complicated in West Africa. For 40 days you have to sit on a mat in your darkened bedroom, wrapped in blue cloth, receiving visitors. If you are a Muslim, you then move out on to the veranda until four months and 10 days have passed. My late friend Douba was a religious radical. He treated Christian priests and Islamic marabouts as colonisers. He preferred his ancestors as intermediaries between him and his creator, Ngala, whom others call Allah or Jesus. Douba sacrificed cocks in his village to please the ancestors. I don't think he can be too happy (wherever he is) to see his wife Hawa hanging around the house in widow's weeds for Islam.

I know Douba would have preferred to be buried in his Bobo family house in the village. His brother was away when he died, and so was I. So the neighbours did their best and called the imam. It pleased the widow. Of course there were plenty of grumbles of the "I never saw him in the mosque" variety. I am sure Douba hadn't been in a church or a mosque for 25 years. He trained to be a Catholic priest, recanted and became a "social Muslim", finally rejecting both faiths as "religious imperialism".

Local Islamic tradition insists that after 40 days there is a "sacrifice". To ensure that Douba's soul rests in peace, we said a prayer and distributed biscuits to small boys with empty tomato tins whose Islamic education consists mainly of begging food for their idle teachers. I hope Douba didn't mind.

I spent four days with the family. "Thank goodness your wife took me to the gynaecologist to have my tubes tied," whispered Hawa. "Sali is four now. If I had not done it, I would have had another baby aged two and one more in my stomach for sure. In that case I think I would have gone mad! Even with Douba's brother and your help, feeding 10 mouths will be difficult. Really, African men are irresponsible. They don't think about the future of their children."

This was all a bit embarrassing. Some of my best friends are African men. Douba was one of them. I remained sympathetic and non-committal. Douba was on the verge of retirement when I remember dragging him to see the gynaecologist. He gave way before a torrent of reason and I handed him the pen to sign the ligature approval papers. Hawa had just given birth to Sali, her sixth (and Douba's ninth) child. He had almost no savings . . . perhaps African men *are* irresponsible. Meanwhile Hawa has become a local campaigner for voluntary sterilisation.

Only after 40 days can the deceased's affairs be disturbed. Going through the papers to sort out Douba's pension, I came across other signs of irresponsibility. Medical irresponsibility. For the past year or so, Douba had been using medication to abusive levels. He was telling his daughters to boil up barks or roots or leaves that he bought in the market. There is nothing wrong with local medicines: many of the profits of Western drug companies originated in the barks of African trees. But like any other medicines, they need professional supervision. To hear Hawa describe him drinking litres of concoctions, is to wonder whether he poisoned himself with too much medicine.

At the bottom of Douba's briefcase I found half a dozen alternative medicine recipes. "Kill a white sheep then place the heart wrapped in the skin on top of a termite mound." More harmful was the packet of doctors' prescriptions I showed to Paul, a doctor and his half-brother-in-law.

"Yes, the trouble with Douba as a patient was that, once he had my diagnosis, he would go off and see another doctor to cross-check. Look: these are from two different doctors who certainly didn't know that they were in partnership. This one has prescribed intravenous flagyl on Friday, and here is another prescription on Monday for metronidazole, which is the same product, and a strong one too. Double medication on this scale added to triple medication from the market place . . . maybe indeed he poisoned himself. Certainly on the last day his stomach started to swell alarmingly, and it was clear that his digestive system had failed."

A Country Diary

Meg Rooney

ALICE SPRINGS, New Territories: I've never seen budgies out the back like there are now. There are clouds of them every morning and evening. As a group zooms overhead, all the black dots in this cloud turn at the same instant and catch the sun. I catch my breath as they flash green and gold. People would never keep budgies in cages if they could see this.

The clouds change shape and direction with split-second timing, streaming out into banners, tightening into arrowheads. There is a growing whirr, like an engine, as they approach, and then a clatter of wings as they pass by.

The wild budgerigars of the Australian outback are mainly green and yellow. Budgies are nomadic. They came here to feast on the explosion of grasses after big summer rains. They seem to have run low on trees to roost in at night and settle in a chattering shower in backyard trees. In the morning it looks like it's been raining white budgie poo.

Creekbeds, the rivers of sand which wind through the desert here and usually flow with water for only a few days per year, are the budgies' nursery. The stately river red gums, which tap into water deep under the sand, drop branches to leave hollows just the right size for budgie nests. Camping in the soft sand near the trees — not right under, so as to avoid dead branches dropping — you can watch budgies necking, mating and feeding their babies.

A friend went out into the bush with some Warlpiri Aboriginal women. They grabbed baby budgies out of hollows in the gum trees and cooked them in the coals. My friend said that they were very tasty, rather like oily chicken.

Soon the budgies will have eaten most of the seed here and all but a few waterholes will have dried up. The birds will then head off northward and the skies here will be cloudless once again.



Black Eagle Landing by Heinrich van den Berg, one of the winners in the BG plc Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. The South African received the Eric Hosking Award for a portfolio of six images taken by a photographer aged 26 or under. The overall winner was Tapani Rasanen, from Finland

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

I HAVE been told that a male child will always grow up to be taller than his mother. Is this true?

THE Duke of Windsor (formerly King Edward VIII) was shorter than his mother, Queen Mary. — *Don Benlow, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire*

PREDICTING a male child's adult height depends on both the mother's and the father's height. It is calculated by adding 12.5cm to the mother's height and then taking the average of this figure and the father's height. The child's adult height should then fall within 8.5cm of this predicted value. According to this formula, if the father is no more than 4.5cm taller than the mother, then it would be possible for the son to be shorter than the mother. — *(Dr) Robert Boon, London*

IF dinosaurs had developed complex civilisations, could any evidence of this possibly have survived 65 million years?

DINOSAUR scientists may have predicted the catastrophe which destroyed their population long enough in advance to have built a huge spaceship containing a sample of the dinosaur ecosystem — thereby enabling a small community of dinosaurs to make a timely escape. Perhaps they will soon be back to reclaim their home planet. — *Stephen Shenfield, Providence, Rhode Island, USA*

ANY complex civilisation could not exist without use of metals and many other minerals, and that means widespread mining. If geologically ancient shafts and tunnels had existed, we should have found some. Add to this the fact that we humans found eucalyptus still confined to Australia and New Guinea, ginkgo trees to China, and maize to the Americas, and it seems that the denizens of any "complex civilisation" didn't even travel. — *Len Clarke, Uxbridge, Middlesex*

I CAN'T remember the last time I had a "square meal". Can someone explain this expression?

TRY AN Oxo cube dissolved in a mug of boiling water, and one or more slices from a pan loaf — that's cubic as well as square. Or two slices of bread, and a slice of that pre-sliced, pre-packed processed cheese. Or does it have to be palatable? — *Mick Furey, Maltby, Rotherham*

A US military term, "square meal" refers to how new recruits were made to eat. Food was lifted off the plate with the fork at a 90 degree angle and then at a 90 degree angle to the mouth. — *Peter Middlemiss, Liverpool*

THIS is a naval term deriving from the shape of the plates on which meals used to be served at sea. The plates were square so that a rim could be easily added in order to prevent food spilling in high seas. But why plates should be traditionally round and when this practice came into being is unclear. — *Melanie Simms, Oxford*

N'DJAMENA, the capital of Chad, boasts two sets of traffic lights. Are there any capital cities which have fewer?

HERE in Port Vila, capital of Vanuatu, we have no traffic lights. Elsewhere in the South Pacific, Honiara, Solomon Islands, used to have one set of traffic lights but it has recently been removed on the grounds that it was causing traffic jams; Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, can have up to three sets in operation depending on how many are in working order at any one time; Rarotonga, Cook Islands, has no traffic lights; the same is true of Funafuti, Tuvalu, and Tarawa, Kiribati. — *Tess Newton, Jennifer Corrin Care and Ted Hill; Port Vila, Vanuatu*

THIMPHU, capital of Bhutan, boasts no traffic lights. They were introduced a couple of years ago, but removed two weeks later as they were regarded as being totally inappropriate. It was appreciated that a policeman directing traffic was more efficient. — *Richard Philip, Thimphu, Bhutan*

WHILE not exactly a "no-go" area, Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, has no green traffic lights. This is attributed to the opportunism of local entrepreneurs, who steal the green glass. After being broken up and filed down, the small pieces are sold as "rough emeralds" to newly arriving European greenhorns, whose combined attributes of avarice and naivety provide a ready source of foreign currency for the locals. — *(Dr) Alistair Humphrey, Broken Hill, NSW, Australia*

THERE are no traffic lights in São Tome, capital of the twin island state of São Tome and Principe. Furthermore, there are no railway tracks, bridges, or tunnels. When I took my exam for a bicycle licence, I was asked to identify traffic signals, road signs, and warnings for railways, bridges and tunnels. When I pointed out that none of these existed on the island I was told that it was in case I ever took my bike to Portugal. — *Michael Fields, Istanbul, Turkey*

Any answers?

ARE human beings the only animals that keep pets? — *Gideon Forman, Toronto, Canada*

WHY do stock market crashes seem to happen in October? — *Chris Allen, Herne, Kent*

IN THE classic 1940s Tom & Jerry cartoons there are several occasions in which Tom bellows in a strange and mournful voice "Don't you believe it!" I recently saw another cartoon which also had this in it. What is its origin? — *Mark Gatiss, London*

CLASSICAL literature has many allusions to lions. Were there lions in Europe and when did they become extinct? — *Luca Sonnino, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

Most intellectual of academics

Sir Isaiah Berlin

ISAIAH BERLIN, the most famous English academic intellectual of the post-war era, outstanding lecturer, peerless conversationalist and superlative essayist, has died at the age of 88. His career began in pure philosophy but he became interested in the history of ideas, especially those claiming to offer a comprehensive view of human purposes. He had a genius, in dazzling lectures and essays, for expounding empathetically the plausibility of such ideas and evoking the character of their principal exponents, but always with determination to expose the danger to freedom and human diversity of all such ideologies that claim to have, or be leading us towards, a single goal or truth. To Berlin, the plurality of human beliefs has to be accepted. Philosophy, no more than brute force, cannot resolve conflicts of values.

His pluralism was not an uncritical exaltation of variety, still less the postmodern cynicism of "anything goes"; rather he recognised the recurrent pain, at times tragedy, of knowing that whatever values we pursue are always at some cost to other values and other people. To be humane and tolerant, and to act honourably, we must know our own limitations and appreciate the almost boundless oddity of others.

He was born in Riga, Latvia, the only child of Marie and Mendel Berlin, a prosperous timber merchant. His parents were secular Jews but his grandparents were pious Chabad Hasidim, the sect now known as the Lubavich. He grew up speaking Russian and German.

The family moved in 1915 from Riga to Andreapol, and on to Petrograd in 1917, of which he had vivid memories. In 1921, his parents, finding conditions intolerable for them, left for England. Isaiah was put to school at St Paul's. He studied classics and picked up French as well, achieving a greater linguistic ease and proficiency than most of his contemporaries at Oxford, where he read philosophy at Corpus Christi College. In 1932, he won a prize fellowship to All Souls and became a Fellow of New College in 1938.

He quickly became famous as a great talker in that famously self-important small world. His conversation bubbled and fizzed at astonishing speed, with literary and philosophical speculation, and illustrative anecdotes drawn from Russian, German and French authors of years gone by, often quite unfamiliar to his listeners.

Berlin's promise as a philosopher was clear in that he became one of a small circle, convened by the formidable A L Austin and including A J Ayer, who met to discuss the purest problems of the new philosophy at the highest possible level. Are there *a priori* truths? What is the logic of counter-factual statements? What is perception? Can we have knowledge of other minds? Berlin stayed with the circle until 1939, but after the war, as he recounts with good humour in his essay Austin And The Early Beginnings Of Oxford Philosophy, he realised this activity, while probably important and certainly exhilarating in its friendly zeal to refute each other's arguments (so that what was left was lean and true), was no longer for him.

So very English he sounded, as was Oxford philosophy itself, yet he never forgot, or let it be forgotten, that he was deeply conscious of Russian and Jewish roots and concerns. Even during the time of apparent total immersion in linguistic analysis, he wrote for the Home University Library a marvellously lucid and judicious Karl Marx: His Life And Environment (1939), almost the first remotely objective account of what Marx had said back then, who he was, why he said it, his Hegelian roots and Jewish background. This short book was, austerely and provocatively, about Marx and ignored Marxism and international communism. The critique of determinism was clear and firm, but not laboured. He had the good manners to enjoy unlikely company and to draw out, not to put down or caricature, interesting people, whether living or dead, whose ideas he thought quite wrong-headed.

With unusual imagination, the Ministry of Information sent him to New York in 1941 to show hesitant American intellectuals the honest face of an intellectual who was a belligerent English patriot, fiercely anti-Nazi but never anti-German, indeed even more than a little Zionist, which presumably helped. The Foreign Office soon brought him to the embassy in Washington where he wrote weekly dispatches on the state of American opinion in his vigorous, flowing, complex long sentences, as if dictated at great speed with perfect control. (Someone said: "Like Gibbon on a motorbike.") Churchill said they were some of his favourite wartime reading. But, alas, the famous tale is not true that Churchill confused Isaiah with Irving Berlin.

He filled in for a few months at the end of 1945 in the embassy at Moscow. There he met, semi-clandestinely, Boris Pasternak and the poet Anna Akhmatova, and later wrote a memorable account of their conversations about Russian literature and the condition of writers under Stalin. Akhmatova was, in her isolation, to attach an extraordinary, almost a crazed significance to their meeting: thus could art and intelligence rise above and annul political oppression universally. And it affected Berlin greatly. To his natural gaiety, literary facility and pyrotechnic intellectuality was added a great moral seriousness.

His conversation bubbled and fizzed along at astonishing speed, with literary and philosophical speculation

When he returned to Oxford, his interests quickly changed from pure philosophy. He had re-read Tolstoy's War And Peace and plunged deeply into the Russian novelists, poets and social thinkers of the mid-19th century. "Their approach seemed to me essentially moral: they were concerned most deeply with what was responsible for injustice, oppression, falsity in human relations, imprisonment whether by stone walls or conformism — unprotesting submission to man-made yokes — moral blindness, egoism, cruelty, humiliation, servility, poverty, helplessness, despair, on the part of so many." Thereafter he turned his back on analytical philosophy; but with a mind sharpened by those ultra-intelligent mental exercises, he evoked the dilemmas inherent in great or hitherto obscure but interesting figures in the history of ideas.

When Akhmatova had told him everything she could about herself personally, as well as her views on all great questions, as people will when they fear to be obliterated in memory, she had asked Berlin who he was. He tells us he replied in kind, but not, of course, what he replied. He is the least autobiographical of writers in any psychological sense. But by then he must surely have known or suspected that his grandfathers, an uncle, an aunt and three cousins had all perished in the Holocaust in Riga. That may have helped make the old ways seem parochial, deeply though he loved Oxford, college life and Englishness. He married in 1956 a beautiful and rich woman of Russian and French parentage, Aline de Gunzbourg.

The following year he became Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory, while remaining a Fellow of All Souls, to where he had been transferred from New College in 1950. His inaugural lecture, Two Concepts Of Liberty, made him instantly famous among intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic and provoked lasting debate. Many called it at the time, "a classic restatement of English liberalism". But that was a two-edged judgment and few of us then knew anything of the more pessimistic tones of Russian 19th century liberalism, quite different from J S Mill's optimistic rationalism.

Three things about its manner became the hallmark of all his writing. He could be and was read by both academics and general intellectuals. He joked against himself that he was "a general intellectual, by analogy to 'general domestic': will tackle anything", for he affably ignored disciplinary boundaries. He combined rhetoric with analytical rigour in an unusual but characteristic way. He was always excited by ideas but attached them to persons, rarely to periods, movements or general tendencies. He translated Turgenev's First Love and later A Month In The Country. The melancholy tone of old Russian liberalism appealed to him more than the English liberal tradition still wedded to a belief in inevitable progress.

Essays flowed out and honours flowed in thick and fast. He was a director of Covent Garden from 1951 to 1965, then from 1974 to 1987, suppressing his dislike of Wagner but not his enthusiasm for early rather than late Verdi, and was a trustee of the National Gallery from 1975-85. Through his friendship with Sir Isaac Wolfson, he was virtually founder as well as first president of Wolfson College in 1967. He was elected to the British Academy in 1957, the same year he was knighted, and was its president from 1974-79.

But for all his fame and authority, he had a certain amiable naivety. The story was that when he received a CBE in 1946, the King said, as he always did: "A pleasure to meet you"; but when he took that as a conversational opener, he was cut short by an equerry: "Bend your neck and stop talking." Two things he never, to his honour, otherwise did.

In 1971 came the Order of Merit. He willingly served on numerous time-consuming scholarship, fellowship and award committees in Britain, the United States and Israel, enjoying meeting the rising stars of each generation, asking them searching, interesting questions — and often generously answering them himself. He held 23 honorary doctorates (including Harvard, Yale, Oxford, London, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv) and several great prizes, including the Jerusalem Prize for services to freedom and the Erasmus Prize for the history of ideas, and was the first to gain the Agnelli Ethics Prize in 1987.

His bibliography is confused since he rewrote speeches and essays for different occasions, and published some in different collections with varying titles. But basically there are four books, Karl Marx, Four Essays On Liberty, Vico And Herder and The Magus Of The North, six volumes of essays edited by his friend Henry Hardy (trying heroically, like Zuleika Dobson's maid packing her trunk, "to make chaos cosmic") and, in 1997, a fine anthology of "the best of Berlin", The Proper Study Of Mankind.

He spoke with astounding rapidity and in that very low-pitched Oxford accent, swallowing many vowels, eliding like a Frenchman, not the high-pitched drawling Oxford. American audiences often found him difficult to follow, both the rapidity and the number of syntactically perfect sentences, always exciting to follow — what would come next, could he possibly regain the main subject, spoken two minutes and 20 dependent clauses ago, with an object sufficient for climax not bathos? Yes, always — often to mass sighs of relief and admiration.

He was the most exciting and famously extempore of lecturers. I could never hear anything but Oxford in his voice, but the mother of an American friend, an uneducated woman born in Belarus, took a telephone call from him one day and, calling her son, remarked that a man with a very English accent was on the telephone: "But he was born in Russia, Mel."

He loved England, as often only émigrés can, and he appeared so very English. It was England almost too specifically — he never spoke or wrote of Great Britain or the United Kingdom, and had no interest in Scottish, Welsh or Irish literature. Well, he was aware that the Scottish enlightenment of David Hume and Adam Smith was part of the history of British empiricism, but on neither did he write, and there was no essay on Burke. Almost too English, but also naturally cosmopolitan, always introducing forgotten or misunderstood continental figures, especially those who had thought on a continental scale.

The speed and restlessness of his thinking made the essay his *métier*, not the book. Most read as if dictated. Conclusions were not always as clear as they might have been had he written more slowly and with difficulty, but then the energy, facility, enthusiasm and the startling bursts of stimulating free-association, bringing unlikely figures together, might have been lost.

He is called a historian of ideas, but he showed little interest in either the pre-history of the ideas he discussed or the sociology of knowledge — the when and how ideas emerge from obscurity to centre stage. What he did do with unique brilliance was to evoke the plausibility of ideas, especially those that threaten freedom, and relate them to the character of particular thinkers. He was humanist through and through, sometimes in the almost reductionist sense that individuals alone move or personify events, but also in the moral sense that it is the happiness or dignity of individuals that counts, not the pride and power of nations or ethnic groups.

Bernard Crick

Sir Isaiah Berlin, philosopher, born June 6, 1909; died November 5, 1997

Isaiah Berlin . . . humanist through and through PHOTO: JANE BOWN



Brecht acquires stinging relevance

THEATRE
Michael Billington

HOW DOES one play Brecht today? With scriptural reverence? Or with the same creative freedom one might apply to any classic writer?

Janet Suzman's vibrant, exhilarating production of The Good Woman Of Sharkville, presented by the Market Theatre of Johannesburg and on tour in Britain, vividly shows how Brecht not only survives but even gains from adaptation.

Suzman and her co-adapter, Gcina Mhlophe, have uprooted Brecht's The Good Woman Of Setzuan and set it in modern South Africa. The structure is still there, but the story has gained a new immediacy. The heroine, Sizakele, is an urban prostitute brought to the brink of ruin by her charity: when she sets up as a tobacconist, her shop is instantly invaded by the poor and homeless.

So out of self-protection she invents a ruthless male cousin, Suduka, who starts out as a Sun City gambler and ends up as the local king of crack. Eventually the impregnated heroine is driven to near-madness by her double life, by the fact that, in a wicked world, the good person needs a bad alter ego in order to survive.

Far from betraying Brecht's original, this version gives it sharper definition. Sharkville itself is portrayed as "one big rubbish dump" wide open to crack-dealing exploitation. And the heroine's cry to the gods of "Why is evil so well rewarded, and why do the good endure such suffering?" acquires fresh poignancy in a South African context.

Occasionally Brecht is softened in the Suzman version: in the original the heroine is left alone beseeching help from the departing gods, whereas here her airman lover rushes to console her. And although Didi Kriel's score makes inventive use of African rhythms, it often obscures the pungent lyrics.

But this adaptation finds a modern parallel for the original's Depression-era economics, and honours Brecht's intention. Above all, it reminds one of his enduring fascination with duality: in Mother Courage and Galileo, the protagonists find that self-preservation and moral principle exist in separate compartments.

A packed house greeted the production with enthusiasm — not something that always happens with Brecht in Britain. Suzman's production also gains from treating the play as an ensemble piece. Mmabatho Mogomotsi is excellent in the dual roles. But this is very much a company show, in which Fana Mokwena strongly reminds one that the pilot himself is a mix of genuine lover and selfish exploiter, and in which Alistair Dube's water-seller is a genuinely sad-comic figure at the mercy of the volatile local climate. Johan Engels's set, with its massive monochrome back wall of skew-whiff doors and windows, also evokes a communal poverty offset by the rainbow-coloured costumes.

In conventional hands, Brecht's Chinese parable begins to look a bit dated; in Suzman's it acquires a stinging relevance.

Tireless man of action

OBITUARY
Samuel Fuller

CINEMA for Samuel Fuller, who has died aged 86, was "Like a battlefield. Love, hate, action, violence, death. In a word, emotion." He lived up to his maxim. The resulting forceful body of work was never accused of understatement or subtlety, or of ducking the truth as he saw it.

Critic turned director Peter Bogdanovich accurately called him "the most explosive talent ever to blast its way through Poverty Row. Eccentric, iconoclastic and in the tradition of tabloid journalism, his pictures all bear the same vibrant, individualistic stamp."

This individual stamp is evident in the actual films he directed, which demand to be seen and heard. The screenplays yield little and a synopsis is redundant, since the films often lack conventional structural coherence. Fuller's technique involved long takes and abrupt cutting, with almost subliminal shots. Elaborate dolly shots would be used, yet the camera could remain unnervingly still — particularly when watching a scene of pain or violence.

His films were brutally in your face, with a passion that reflected his concern with America, the politics of life and his formative years. Fuller was a journalist, a writer of pulp novels, a decorated soldier, a screenwriter for himself and others. He was also an opinionated, raconteur and self-publicist. Relentlessly chomping on fat cigars, Fuller remained a characterful maverick in an industry he observed declining into blandness.

Fuller began work as a copy boy on the New York Journal when barely a teenager. At 17 he became the city's youngest crime reporter and worked on newspapers across the country during the 1920s and 1930s. In essence, he remained a reporter and cartoonist all his life, investing his work with the immediacy — even crudeness — of that profession. He also wrote short stories, and in 1935 published the first of his pulp novels, Burn Baby Burn. A year later, he co-wrote the film Hats Off and seven screenplays followed, including Gangs Of New York (1938) and Power Of The Press (1943), plus numerous books under different names, including The Dark Page (1944), later filmed.

In 1942, he joined the army, serving with the US 16th Infantry in North Africa and Europe. He received the Bronze Star, the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. His experiences were immortalised in several war films, including the autobiographical The Big Red One (1980) and Merrill's Marauders (1962).

After the war, Fuller returned to screenwriting with a remake of Gangs Of New York, retitled Gangs Of The Waterfront. More notable was a taut melodrama, Shockproof (1949), directed by Douglas Sirk. That year also marked Fuller's directorial debut with the western I Shot Jesse James, from his own screenplay. It disregarded the conventions of the greatest of all movie genres, and with its contrived narrative, odd relationships and complicated emotions — presented but never analysed — might be seen as archetypal Fuller.

The Baron Of Arizona (1950), a more interesting western, followed, and Fuller was up and running. Two war films were made in 1951. Both Steel Helmet and Fixed Bayonets concern men under pressure during the Korean war and share an unsentimental view of battle, a dedication to American values and a stated anti-communism that informed much of his work.

A year later, Fuller made an even more personal work, investing $200,000 of his own money in the production. Park Row, written, produced and directed by Fuller was a vivid homage to his ex-profession, journalism. After this cathartic work he moved on to the first of his crime movies, Pickup On South Street (1953), financed by 20th Century Fox.

Made at the height of the McCarthy era, it received short shrift from some critics because of its seeming rightwing views. But it remains a stunning portrait of three low-lifers, one of whom gets involved with a spy working for the communists.

Fuller's work was becoming more complex, better cast and financed, but he was still on the B-movie treadmill and quickly wrote Prince Of Players and The Command, and wrote and directed Hell And High Water, all in 1954. In the following year he made another crime movie, House Of Bamboo, which blended elements of race (a recurring theme) and war within its thriller format. It marked the first of his many screen appearances.

In 1957, Fuller wrote, produced and directed three films, China Gate, the magnificent Forty Guns and one of his masterpieces, Run Of The Arrow, a melancholy study of a southerner who, by chance, fires the last shot in the Civil war and wounds a Unionist officer. Unable to face the outcome of the war he joins the Sioux. This densely textured film, with its impassioned performance from Rod Steiger, formed part of Fuller's richest period and following the dynamic Forty Guns came a further six works for Fox and Columbia.



Fuller . . . relentlessly chomping on fat cigars, he remained a compulsive talker and a characterful maverick

Among these was another film concerned with national identity, The Crimson Kimono (1959), and a rigorous gangster movie, Underworld USA (1961). An oddity about neo-Nazism, Verboten! (1959) uses actual concentration camp footage to disturbing effect, but was tangential to his war films, which peaked with Merrill's Marauders (1962).

HIS NEXT work was an independent production and must stand as one of the most outrageous, passionate and controversial films ever made. Shock Corridor (1963) places a journalist inside an asylum as an investigator, and the portrait presented is of the asylum as a microcosm of America. The movie — upsetting even today — might be seen as exploitative were it not for Fuller's vision and personality, which present a painful view of his truth. This extraordinary, even ugly, movie was followed by The Naked Kiss (1964), which he later turned into a novel.

From the mid-1960s onwards, Fuller found it difficult to work as a director. As the studio system crumbled he and directors such as Budd Boetticher, Joseph H Lewis and Edgar G Ulmer were relegated to maverick productions or television, which was largely responsible for their plight. During the 1960s, Fuller directed at least half a dozen of the Iron Horse series, one or two of The Virginian, a pilot for a series, Dogface (1963), which flopped, and an episode of the popular Dick Powell Show.

Times were lean enough for him to rework his screenplay of Pickup On South Street into The Cape Town Affair (1967). Sadly a more personal project, Shark (1969), ended disastrously and he had his directorial credit removed.

Fuller had not received the critical support he deserved in his own country, and fared only slightly better in Britain. In France, the position was markedly different, and his stock grew higher in Europe thanks to film appearances, including Jean-Luc Godard's Pierrot Le Fou (1963); Dennis Hopper's The Last Movie (1971) and Wim Wenders's The American Friend (1977). He even found work as a director in Europe but Dead Pigeon On Beethoven Street (1972), which he wrote, directed and acted in (and turned into a novel two years later) was wilful and obscure and little seen outside festivals.

After a 15-year period on the margins of mainstream cinema, working in TV for other directors and attending festivals and retrospectives, Fuller achieved the seemingly impossible. A 25-year project — his autobiographically inspired The Big Red One — was financed by Hollywood and starred Lee Marvin.

A summation of his earlier war movies and an exhausting coda to the real thing, it proved less than the box office smash he needed. It and the director were the subject of a Dutch documentary — just one of several films about him.

The most intriguing of these was Jim Jarmusch's Tigrero, A Film That Was Never Made (1994), an extended illustrated conversation about Fuller's abortive film in the Brazilian jungle. It tried the patience of even dedicated film buffs at the Berlin Film Festival. More successful was the BFI's documentary The Typewriter, The Rifle And The Movie Camera (1996).

The emergence of his war movie saw him invited back to Hollywood for an odd climax to his career with The White Dog (1982). It had the distinction of being banned for a while and failed with the public, who could no longer stomach the crude, passionate and uneasy portrait of racism, shown by the story of a dog that only attacks blacks.

Fuller had chosen to live in Paris since the early 1980s with his second wife, actress Crista Lang. He never ceased working, claiming literally hundreds of embryo projects. Sadly, there was less room for such mavericks or primitives — as the critic Andrew Sarris dubbed him — in an increasingly juvenile and money-obsessed film industry.

Brian Baxter

Samuel Michael Fuller, film-maker and writer, born August 12, 1911; died October 30, 1997

Fear in Provence

CINEMA
Richard Williams

IT'S HIGH summer on a farm near the Lubéron hills. This is Peter Mayle country, or near enough — a land of legendary abundance. Sure enough, the first thing we see in **Will It Snow for Christmas?** is a group of children playing amid the hay bales, bathed in the light of all the summers of memory. Don't be fooled. It won't last. Swiftly undermining the mood of those opening seconds, Sandrine Veysset's film evolves into something much more interesting: an account of a mother's struggle to sustain the lives of her children in the face of their father's cruelty.

On this land, a fortyish woman is bringing up the seven children she's borne her lover. The father, who owns the property, lives with his wife and their several older children on another farm nearby. He visits his second family occasionally, to supervise the gathering of the produce — tomatoes, onions, beetroot, parsley, radishes — and to collect his ration of sex with the woman. Among her children, he generates fear and resentment.

The farm buildings could easily be seen as picturesque, and the lives of their inhabitants as an idyll. But while the woman attends to her children's needs, making do in a house that lacks heating, a bathroom or an indoor lavatory, we gradually begin to see her stoicism, and to understand that it is acquired rather than inherent. And now, as the seasons pass, the man's behaviour — his bullying, his fumbled passes at his own daughter — is starting to break it down.

It helps the film that neither Dominique Reymond and Daniel Duval, who play the couple, has a familiar face. With, say, Depardieu and Deneuve in their places, our response would have been very different. Reymond and Duval are good-looking people, but not disruptively so. Each has a particular sort of strength. We can easily believe in the power of their original passion, and in the possibility of its survival in unorthodox circumstances.

Both of them, after all, are benefiting. The woman long ago traded a full relationship for a life among her children. The man gets a secondary source of sex and an additional labour force, although it is characteristic of the movie's intelligence that the director never tries to persuade us that his existence is anything other than arduous. Kindness and its opposite are on show here, but it is clear that they are not subject to simple judgments. No one, surely, makes plans for a relationship such as this. But it happens, and people sometimes find themselves making the best of it, for as long as they can.

Unlike most French first-time directors, Veysset is no dedicated cinéaste. She is a 30-year-old English graduate from Avignon who cared little for the cinema before she took a job as a set-dresser on Léos Carax's Les Amants du Pont-Neuf. Carax kept her on as his chauffeur, and encouraged her to write something. The result turned into this film, winner of the César award for the best first film earlier this year.

Veysset completely avoids the sort of detailing so often used to disguise an absence of content. We are in Provence, but the actors don't have regional accents. It seems to be the 1970s, but there are no topical references. This director cares only for the souls of her characters, and their effect on each other.

The impression of directness is reinforced by a technical quality not much beyond that of a home movie. When the winter comes, there is nothing appealing about the bare trees or the rain. The world looks an uncomfortable place.

This a powerful and unflinching film, self-evidently the product of an independent mind. Don't miss it.

NO ONE gets a movie to move like John Woo. He's the director who persuades exploding speedboats to climb into the air like Roman candles, who suspends our disbelief while police cars keep pace with an accelerating jetliner on a chase down an apparently endless runway, and who can command a shoot-out featuring 5,000 "bullet effects", each one of them up there on the screen in a splash of magnesium sparks, cut with an amazing feel for staccato polyrhythms. He is the Diaghilev of disaster.

And yet, technique apart, what differentiates Woo from most of his kind is a readiness to acknowledge that his characters are as human as his hardware. All the things mentioned in the preceding paragraph, and more, occur during the course of **Face/Off**, but they are never allowed to dominate the story of two deadly rivals who trade identities in a classically Manichaean struggle.

It's an ingenious set-up, as these things go. FBI special agent Sean Archer (John Travolta) is on the trail of freelance terrorist Castor Troy (Nicolas Cage), the killer of Archer's five-year-old son. But when Archer finally captures his quarry, he discovers that the flamboyant Castor and his computer-nerd brother Pollux (Alessandro Nivola) have planted a massive biological bomb somewhere in downtown Los Angeles, timed to explode within days.

The only way for Archer to locate the device is to trick the information out of Pollux. His method involves using laser-surgery techniques to exchange his face for Castor's, secretly assuming every aspect of his rival's identity while leaving his own face lying, for the time being, in a dish of preservative solution.

Waking up to find his own face gone, Castor forces the surgeon to graft on Archer's features before eliminating the witnesses and torching all evidence of the swap, thus potentially condemning himself and his nemesis to an eternity trapped in each other's identity.

This is a preposterous movie in most respects (virtually no element of the plot withstands even cursory analysis), but at least the schematics of the screenplay aren't the whole of the story. Presented with this unusual opportunity, the two lead actors display their own command of natural pyrotechnics. As the personalities pass from one body to the other, each of them gets the chance to play not just the opposing character — Travolta switching gleefully from the worthy, fretful Archer to the snakily hypersexual Troy, while Cage travels in the other direction — but also to try out the technical apparatus of the other actor. The screenwriters, Mike Werb and Michael Colleary, have nothing much to tell us about the nature of identity, but it's a hoot to see Travolta and Cage mimicking each other's signature riffs, and then pushing it a stage further as they imitate the other guy imitating them, if you see what I mean.

The trickiest and most sinister passage finds Travolta — who at this stage is playing Cage playing Travolta — returning to the family home, gleefully regenerating his host's tired sex life with a pleasantly astonished wife (Joan Allen) and rubbing up against the teenage daughter (Dominique Swain).

It emerges that Castor also has a five-year-old son, providing the excuse for a symmetrical resolution which some critics believe to be post-modern, although it looks like good old-fashioned sentimentality to me.

There's nothing much more to Face/Off than big-bucks entertainment, but at least, when faced with the need to create a climactic stand-off between half a dozen characters, Woo choreographs it in such a way that we discover ourselves thinking less about how the gunfight is going to be resolved than about the relationships between the people holding the guns.

Out of the dark . . . Sandrine Veysset's debut, Will It Snow For Christmas?, is a fine tale of a mother's struggle to nurture her children

Romancing Polanski

JAZZ
John Fordham

IF YOU stood in London's Jazz Café near the front bar (a thoroughfare with noise levels that could give the Cup Final a run); so that the drunks were in your midfield and the band in your sight, you might have assumed that Tomasz Stanko's show was a typical ECM Records chamber-recital, a reserved and private concert out of place in a club.

Some 10 paces in, and you found yourself in the silent, closed-doors house of the entranced.

The occasion was a showcase for one of ECM's most high-profile new projects of 1997, Polish trumpeter Stanko's reexamination of the music he played in the sixties for the pianist and film-score composer Krzysztof Komeda, conjuror of sombre jazz backdrops to several early movies by Roman Polanski.

This was always one of the autumn jazz events to look forward to, because Stanko has long been a musician of imagination and audacity. His Norwegian rhythm section is a European legend. Komeda's music itself is sourced from jazz traditions and open to improvisation, yet tautly independent. The new record by this ensemble, Litania, is magnificent.

The band played without a break for an hour and a half and not only justified the promise of the disc, but also delivered a hot contender for London jazz performance of the year.

Unlike many jazz performances, particularly sixties-retro ones, the shifting pacing was an endless source of fascination.



Tomasz Stanko: gripping

The melancholy tread of Komeda's chordal themes, delivered in the solemn collective timbre of two saxes and Stanko's windswept trumpet, was constantly prodded at by Bobo Stensen's Bill Evans-like piano phrasing, the darkly sporadic counterpoint of Palle Danielsson's bass and Jon Christensen's spare but muscular drumming.

On his own, delivering the discomfiting lament of the Rosemary's Baby theme, Stanko's mix of sagging slurs, shards of chilly brightness and bruised, tremulous pitching was unnervingly gripping, but the evolving group drive was what made the concert as special as it turned out to be.

The influence of Miles Davis's laconically swinging music of the fifties and sixties was often evident in Komeda's faster themes, but Stanko's band brings bursts of a post-Coltrane intensity and occasional abstraction to their reinvention. And an improvised group conversation fronted by Joakim Milder's tersely unpredictable sax lines against Stenson's fluid piano was exactly the kind of effortless spontaneity that only comes in the best jazz performances — and then usually fleetingly.

Spurious air of well-being

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

THE idea of David Jason **In His Element** (ITV) was that he should feed a school of reef sharks by hand. Jason didn't know that the sharks would be ravenous, not having seen a snack-sized actor for a week. I didn't know sharks needed feeding at all. I thought they got along fine on their own. This is why TV is such an educational medium.

The scene of hand-feeding was gripping television. I have seen many films about sharks and they all emphasise that sharks are All Right Really. They are all right really but — as Patrick Campbell pointed out about nations — they are All Ghastly In Bulk.

These were sharks in bulk. It was, as Jason said, like diving into a city. And it was rush hour. He had been promised up to 10 sharks. Some 50 turned up. At times you could not see for solid shark.

Swirling shapes performed a kind of dance, fluidly missing each other by millimetres. The tempo quickened, the dancers thickened as the smell of fish oozed from the box of bait. Sharks coiled and insinuated themselves like cats between Jason, Stuart, his co-diver, and Mark, the cameraman. The casually flicking tails whacked their masks. They seemed to rub ecstatically against the box of fish. Stuart's dark hair lifted in the water as if standing on end. Jason's was pale as vermicelli.

Now the sharks were jostling like dogs. The difference was the silence. You could feel their impatience and intensity but there was no sound at all except the bubbling of the divers' air. It was a silent riot. It was like being mobbed by ghosts.

Scuba divers communicate in sign language and Stuart, who was wearing chain-mail gloves, touched his finger and thumb together, which means "I'm OK!" A passing shark snapped at his hand, which means "Oh yeah?" The last shots were frenzied. Stuart held out fish on a spike. If Jason did any shark-feeding, I didn't see it.

Even before the dive he had grown ruminative and sombre. He looked as if he were mentally buffing up his Hamlet. He said darkly, "Much as I like the creatures of the deep, we shouldn't be doing what we are doing." When his face reappeared over the side of the boat, you saw that a deep tan gives a wholly spurious air of well-being. He exited stage left in a marked manner. Call me psychic, but I did get a strong impression that there would be Things Said.

The House That Reith Built (BBC1) is the first of four modestly chuffed cheers for the BBC.

John Reith himself was quite magnificent on television. It was like a talking elk. You can't account for it. Reith's secretary, Dorothy Torry, though initially intimidated by what seemed to be something knocked up by Frankenstein on a wet Friday — 6ft 7ins, facially scarred and all those eyebrows — grew very fond of Reith. Once, when an announcer whom she shyly admired was fired, no one would tell her why. "So I asked Sir John. He said 'I'm afraid he's a homosexual.' I said 'What's that?' And he explained it to me most gently." Reith, having laid down the commandments, including a few Moses forgot, did not inherit the promised land.

Enemy of the people

Howard Zinn

A History of the American People
by Paul Johnson
Weidenfeld 925pp £25

PAUL JOHNSON'S A History Of The American People is what we have come to expect from this prolific writer — clear, colourful narrative, vivid character sketches, prodigious research, sweeping, confident statements, and an insistent conservative viewpoint which tempts him into serious omissions. He will not conceal his opinions, he tells us. Good. Then we can judge his history free of pretences to objectivity — his or ours.

Almost at the start, we notice something interesting: Johnson passes quickly over a defining moment in American history — the Columbus story — important because it is the first lesson every American schoolchild learns. How you treat that story — what you choose to tell of it — signals your view of the longer American experience, reaching to our time.

In school textbooks, Columbus has always been presented as an unmitigated hero. Only recently has a new set of facts — always available but ignored — begun to seep into public attention: that Columbus, on landing, and desperate for gold, encountered native Americans who were peaceful and generous (by his own admission) and tortured them, kidnapped them, enslaved them, murdered them. Johnson, who goes into much detail about other matters (like Ronald Reagan's jokes) is silent on this. Among his copious references there is none to Bartolome de las Casas, an eyewitness, who described in detail the horrifying atrocities committed by Columbus and his compatriots against the Indians, which resulted in the native population of Hispaniola being wiped out — genocide is an appropriate term — by the year 1550.

I suggest this is not an innocent omission. Johnson wants us to look benignly on the history of the United States. Yes, he says, there were "grievous wrongs" committed in "the dispossession of a indigenous people" and in the institution of slavery. But has the US, he asks at the start of his book, "expiated its organic sins"? His whole book suggests that it has, and that in doing so it has become (he says at the end) "a human achievement without parallel . . . the first, best hope for the human race".

In order to come to his conclusion, he must choose what to tell us, what to omit, what to downplay. A case in point is the Mexican war of 1846-48, a war of aggression in which the US seized half of Mexico. Johnson is not offended by that war. He passes lightly over its bloody suppression of Indians and Mexicans. He acknowledges "provocation and hypocrisy" on the part of President James Polk but "in Polk's favour it has to be said that Mexico was a tiresome neighbour, always asking for trouble". He suggests that for "most Americans" (but we sense it is his view), "it made moral as well as economic and political sense for the civilised United States to wrest as much territory as possible from the hands of Mexico's greedy and irresponsible rulers".

How, in 1846, could one tell the opinion of "most Americans"? We do know that half of the soldiers of General Winfield Scott's army, on the way to Mexico City, refused to fight any longer, and departed. Johnson's history of "the American people" pays only passing attention to the great people's movements for social justice: the anti-slavery movement, the Populist Movement of aggrieved farmers, workers' struggles for the eight-hour day. He ignores the repeated use of state force — police, National Guard, army — against strikers, instead attributing to trade unions "a fatal use of violence".

In treating the reconstruction period after the civil war, Johnson disregards the latest of American scholarship and instead follows the long-discredited views of racist writers when he describes the post-slavery governments, in which for the first time blacks held office and instituted social reforms, as "hopelessly inefficient and degradingly corrupt" and dominated by "carpetbaggers and scalawags".

Coming to the end of the 19th century, it takes a rather astounding blindness to the long history of America's military interventionism to talk, as Johnson does, of the Spanish-American war as the nation's "one imperialist adventure". He utters not a word about the years of warfare, full of atrocities, needed to subdue the Filipino independence movement. He refers to this gory affair only as "the retention of the Philippines as a colony".

Run, Columbus is coming . . . and Paul Johnson may not be far behind

All he can say about the dozens of US marine interventions in the Caribbean in the early part of the 20th century, for the benefit, largely, of American banks and corporations, is that such intervention "was exercised repeatedly, and on the whole sensibly and to general satisfaction". Apparently to Johnson's satisfaction. He refers to the CIA's 1954 military coup against Guatemala's democratically elected government as "the overthrow of an unpopular leftist regime", remaining silent about the terrorist government that was then instituted and given military aid by the US.

His comment on the Korean war (1950-53) is simply absurd, saying "America had demonstrated its prudence in restraining its superior firepower" when in fact it had engaged in ferocious bombing, using napalm, and killed hundreds of thousands of civilians. His criticism of the Vietnam war, in which the US dropped three times as many bombs as it did in the second world war and was responsible for the deaths of several million people, was that it did not use enough force!

Johnson's History Of The American People shows no sympathy for the American people in those instances when they have protested and rebelled, demanding a redress of grievances, as with the Bonus March of first world war veterans in 1932. His view of the 1960s is that of the American Establishment, frightened by the challenge to its authority. His treatment of the sit-ins and Freedom Rides, classic instances of non-violent protest, is simply malicious. "Such activities almost inevitably involved the use or threat of force, or provoked it." He cannot accept that the American people turned sharply against the Vietnam war as it became aware of its brutalities, and is silent on the fact that thousands of veterans of that war became part of the anti-war movement.

As he moves into recent decades, Johnson becomes a bit hysterical. He sees the congressional investigation of President Reagan's illegal activities to arm Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries as a "witch hunt". He resents the demands of blacks, women, Latinos, and cites a report by the rightwing American Enterprise Institute that "women had effectively achieved equality".

Since Johnson has decided that the US is "the first, best hope for the human race", he has shaped its history accordingly. If we prefer to see that history as a complex and unfinished struggle of Americans for justice, against militarism, for economic, racial and sexual equality, we are badly served by a fawning admiration of those in power, pretending to be a history of "the people".



When children fall prey to fantasists

Alex Clark

The End of Alice
by A M Homes
Anchor 252pp £6.99

THIS novel, an everyday tale of paedophilia and child murder in middle-class America, is published in Britain plastered with the panegyrics of American critics, united mainly by their admiration for A M Homes's horrifyingly "real" treatment of a taboo subject, at the same time as the publisher's blurb draws our attention to the "major controversy" that the book has engendered.

The novel's narrator is a fifty-something inmate of a high-security prison wing, on the block where they keep the "sexuals". Clearly, he is highly intelligent, literate, urbane; these qualities occasionally — and here is one of Homes's neater achievements — conjuring a barely believable sense of humanity. Unfortunately, the narrator is also a convicted child murderer, the dispatcher of a 12-year-old girl, Alice, with whom he had sex both before and after her death. Was she his only victim? Could she, in any sense, have been complicit? These are two of the questions which surface repeatedly throughout the book as its narrator tells a story in which self-revelation and self-fashioning are determinedly and consistently confused.



Homes: an everyday tale of paedophilia and child murder

We are in the territory of the unreliable narrator, an area which becomes even more crowded once the prisoner begins an intense correspondence with a 20-year-old woman. Not simply a groupie, she herself has embarked on the seduction of a just-pubescent boy, the process of obsessional observation, pursuit and capture forming the mainstay of her letters. Of course, we can't tell if their contents are in her head, his, or bear some sort of relation to the truth. All we can say is that the level to which her prey responds, co-operates, and initiates their sexual and emotional relationship mirrors closely the narrator's version of Alice's behaviour.

If the currency that sustains novels like these is the play between our fictionalised narratives of ourselves against a roll call of facts, and our expectations of the novel against what it really says, how far does this novel succeed? Well, it's certainly ambitious, but it continually obscures its aims in clouds of overblown prose which do little to evoke the texture and atmosphere of proscribed desire, and over-signification which quickly spends itself. What it lacks in particular is the wit and intelligence, the control, to bring this variety of textual tricksiness off. The unfavourable comparison with Nabokov, and not simply for the subject matter, is obvious.

But the subject matter does matter, and this is a sexually explicit and violent book. What it fails to do is to really illuminate the paedophile mind. For example, we know that child abusers frequently figure their victims as complicit, as far from innocent, as seducers far more practised than they are. We may even believe that a more complicated view of children's sexuality does not completely rule that out. But if you wonder, as you reach the end of this book, why these things should be, and why its narrator inflicted 64 stab wounds on a 12-year-old girl, then wonder away.

Praise for novels like this often centres around the belief that the novelist has been "dangerous", or has "taken risks". The new critical taboo, apparently, is "safety". But actually, the risk here appears to be in the order of those incurred during superficially knuckle-whitening sports, the kind that turn out to be highly supervised and far less truly dangerous than, as the commonplace goes, getting in your car. The allure and the mystique of risk, then, without the consequences.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Rosebud: The Story of Orson Welles, by David Thomson (Abacus, £9.99)

GLORIOUSLY, it does not matter what opinion you have of Welles and his work for this book to be worth reading. Thomson exposes Welles as both genius and (after a fashion) charlatan, and reveals both the plenitude and emptiness of the man: "his capacious, pre-empting worldliness was a way of stopping anyone from having an advantage over him". It's funny how someone who understands film so deeply should express his understanding in such wonderful writing. It reflects well on the movies, but it also makes the movies reflect well on the writing: their magic rubs off on Thomson. Buy it.

Fairy Tale, by Alice Thomas Ellis (Penguin, £6.99)

A WORK that plays off the claims of paganism and orthodox religion might be, for some, of nugatory interest; but this is a novel, and a very well-written one at that, and so one can entertain, and be entertained by, notions that would not normally occur to one. Ellis has, as Cressida Connolly so aptly puts it, "invented a genre all her own, the supernatural comedy of manners", a fantastic and heady mixture of real spookiness and sharp urbanity. Ellis is at the top of her form here: there is steel beneath her playfulness.

Swann's Way, by Marcel Proust, trs C K Scott Moncrieff (Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics, £7.99)

PENGUIN seem to be trying to recapture the ground lost to Vintage's Kilmartin/Enright translation by presenting the Moncrieff version as a work of art in its own right — but without any introduction or notes. Fair enough, but they will run into problems with later volumes, for Moncrieff worked from a notoriously corrupt edition of the original.

The Prehistory of Sex, by Timothy Taylor (Fourth Estate, £8.99)

WE CAN look at human evolution from so many angles — I remember a good book that did it by looking at the weather. This one does it by examining our attitudes to sex. Taylor rummages through those parts of museum collections deemed too filthy for most of us to see — explicit carvings, Roman brothel tokens (I'll have a number XIII, please) — and makes us realise that we've been kinky so-and-sos since before time began. There are indications that Taylor is a bit of a theistic New Age bore, but he seems to know his stuff. Fascinating.

Gentle art of Persuasion

Clare Harman

Jane Austen
by David Nokes
4th Estate 592pp £20

Jane Austen: A Life
by Claire Tomalin
Viking 384pp £20

WHEN Jane Austen's brother Henry wrote the first "Biographical Notice" about the author for the posthumous publication of Northanger Abbey and Persuasion in 1818, he clearly thought it would be the last word on the subject. "Short and easy will be the task of the mere biographer," he wrote.

One hundred and eighty years and possibly as large a number of books on Austen later, her fame and her readership continue to grow, and however ill-documented her life, there are always plenty of biographers queuing up to write it. Without any new manuscripts having come to light, there seems more to say about Jane Austen than ever.

Austen was a prolific correspondent, but most of her letters were destroyed after her death by her sister Cassandra. The Victorians used the letters to corroborate the popular cult of "Divine Jane's harmless gentility", and now the same material is called as evidence to prove that she was "Noisy and Wild", "Profligate and Shocking" and a regular "Wild Beast", to quote three chapter headings from David Nokes's book.

We are used to revisionism in biography and tend to equate it with progress towards truth. What is fascinating about the two latest biographies of Jane Austen, by Claire Tomalin and David Nokes, is that they seem to be revising in concert, using the same material, and come to pretty much the same conclusions, but their emphases and subtler interpretations are remarkably unalike. Austen hated Bath, or loved Bath, had a happy or unhappy childhood, did or didn't resent the good fortune of her rich brother Edward or neglect her mad brother George, depending on which book you read.

Strange contradictions emerge. According to Nokes, Austen's relationship with her friend Mrs Lefroy "was marked as much by suspicion as by affection", while in Tomalin's version she is Austen's "dear friend" and role model, "the ideal parent". The result may not be very illuminating about Jane Austen, but speaks volumes about the art of biography.

Nokes, a well-known academic and the biographer of Swift and John Gay, sets out vigorously "to challenge the familiar image of [Jane Austen] as a literary maiden aunt". He tackles the problem of our over-familiarity with Jane Austen by devoting a great deal of his book to some of the colourful secondary characters in her family circle, such as Jane's cousin Eliza Hancock, her kleptomaniac aunt, her "lost" brother George. Nokes's research is splendid, but spoiled for me by his method of dramatising it. However amusing it may be to open a life of Austen in the following way, "It is the rainy season in the Sunderbunds. Inside his lonely makeshift hut the Surgeon-Extraordinary sits writing a letter home . . .", this kind of semi-fictionalised reconstruction simply will not do.

In his introduction, Nokes attempts to justify "some degree of invention" on the grounds that it can produce interesting insights, but seems confused about his own methodology. This is not at all the monumental scholarly biography one might have expected from such a writer (and which is needed).

Nokes is in sympathy with the anarchic energy of Austen's juvenilia, but his treatment of the novels is sketchy, and over the length of 500 pages, his relish for cynicism in Austen's letters begins to look like special pleading in the cause of killing off the maiden aunt. He is right to draw attention to the satiric verse about St Swithin that Austen wrote on her deathbed (and which Tomalin only glances at), but why does he have to repeat his point three times and in almost exactly the same words? And why is he so confident that "the sole purpose" of Austen's choice of pseudonym, "Mrs Ashton Dennis", was to enable her to sign off letters to an unresponsive publisher with the initials M A D?

Claire Tomalin's approach is far less dogmatic or sensational. But what she lacks in pyrotechnics is more than made up for by the confidence in her judgment that her thoughtful and honest approach inspires. Her reading of Austen is highly intelligent but never showy, and I consider her very reasonable suggestion that the precise dating of Jane's compositions by Cassandra may point to the existence (and destruction) of a diary a really masterly stroke. The lacunae in Austen's papers have always tempted speculation about her inner life: romance, malice, incest, depression and lesbianism are some of the suggestions dealt with by both biographers here, but no one before Tomalin has, to my knowledge, exercised their ingenuity and imagination so well on the life of the body; the "lost unrecorded history" of physical discomfort, menstruation, travel, food and appearance.

Jane Austen: fame without end

Both authors are at pains to point out that though Austen's own life was outwardly uneventful, she was surrounded by drama, even scandal. Nokes covers the trial of Jane's aunt Leigh-Perrot in fascinating detail, and takes great interest, as did Jane herself, in the naval careers of her brothers. Tomalin has a lengthy section on the Comte de Feuillide, the cousin-in-law who was guillotined in the French Revolution, and both writers enjoy the glamour surrounding Eliza Hancock, Warren Hastings's "[god]daughter" as Nokes teasingly refers to her. Earlier biographies only hinted at some of these stories, but no one will be able to write about Austen again without allowing for the context they provide and the insight into her worldly novels, which as Tomalin says, are "ways of looking at England".

"What is become of all the shyness in the world?" Austen wrote in a letter to Cassandra, noting the inquisitive manners of a young visitor who wanted to examine the treasures of her writing-desk drawer. Manners and moral fashions change, and as Austen's world slips further from our understanding, Tomalin and Nokes between them have done a great service by keeping the lines of communication open.

Having read both books in succession, with their thorough use of the same well-known and well-loved quotations from the novels and letters, only reminds the reader how inexhaustible Jane Austen is. We think we keep reinventing her when, like any great artist, she is reinventing us.

If you would like to order either book (or both) at the special price of £16 each contact CultureShop

Melancholy tales from the Brunswick Hotel

Antonia Fraser

The Queen's House:
A Social History of Buckingham Palace
by Edna Healey
Michael Joseph 434pp £25

"*DEAR* old B P is still standing and that is the main thing." Thus the present Queen Mother pluckily ended her account of the bombing of Buckingham Palace in 1940 to Queen Mary in the country. Princess Margaret struck a more plaintive note: "The [German] pilot got a double iron cross, the beast!" There is a historical irony in both these reactions. What will forcibly strike readers of Edna Healey's The Queen's House: A Social History of Buckingham Palace, is that the German pilot could really have done the present Royal Family a big favour. If "dear old B P" had really gone up in flames, with the passage of time it might have been seen that Princess Margaret's beast deserved a British medal to add to his German ones.

For Edna Healey's amusing, "gossipy" account of the "fortunes" of Buckingham Palace makes it quite clear — though she herself is far too tactful to underline the fact — that far more misery than mirth has seized the occupants of this august dwelling. Furthermore, a lot of misery seems to have been directly related to B P itself. William IV, for example, thought the whole place should be turned into a barracks.

On moving in, Queen Mary herself mourned her previous home in the Mall: "Oh! how I regret our dear beloved Marl[borough] House, the most perfect of houses and so compact. Here everything is so straggly, such distances to go and so fatiguing." George V told Lord Esher that he would be happy to pull down Buckingham Palace, sell off its 39-acre garden and use the money to rebuild Kensington Palace. (Another interesting possibility to contemplate, given recent events.) As it was, Queen Mary devoted herself to the redecoration of the palace, over the next 40-odd years, in order to eliminate the "gold and orchids" of Edward VII which she found so distasteful.

It is not clear whether the present Queen loves or hates or loves/hates the palace where she has reigned, if not lived, since the death of her father. Edna Healey refers to the palace not only as a splendid setting for the Queen as head of state but also as "her home", before adding the significant words "for some part of the year". It is difficult to believe that the Queen endured the Michael Fagan intrusion (where was her page? Out walking the corgis) without experiencing some abiding trauma about the place where it all happened. In her new style of royal living which we are promised, would she — and we — not be happier if Windsor Castle became the setting and the home with Balmoral and Sandringham as holiday homes?

Leaving aside these melancholy reflections, it is good to move on to those eras when domestic happiness did prevail at B P. Very often, the palace has been gloriously associated with music, not only with Handel and Mozart and Mendelssohn, but also, as Healey points out, with concerts organised by Prince Charles. In 1992, he gave a surprise celebration for the 80th birthday of Sir George Solti, which is remembered by Lady Solti, not only for performances by Placido Domingo, Kiri te Kanawa and Birgit Nilsson, but also for the dinner: "A very grand private house had come to life for the occasion. I shall always remember helping myself to chicken salad at the buffet under the wonderful Van Dycks."

The origins of Buckingham Palace were in a gift from a King to a Queen, a celebration of a happy marriage, hence its first name of "the Queen's House". First Queen Charlotte, aged 19, led King George III, aged 25, through the new palace on his birthday, June 4, 1763. Eight years later, the King gave the palace to his consort, being delighted with "this unexpected testimony of his consort's love and respect". Twelve out of Queen Charlotte's 15 children would be born there.

Similarly, the early married life of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert was a time of much domestic happiness at the palace. These episodes should perhaps be put against the persistent accusations of royal extravagance with regard to the establishment, accusations certainly not limited to our own day. William Creevey, referring to the Germanic origins of the Royal Family, called the palace "Brunswick Hotel" in his diary while it was being built, commenting: "Can one be surprised at people becoming Radical with such specimens of royal prodigality before their eyes?"

This book would have been all the more readable had cuts been made. Some of the "historical" statements are of a staggering banality, not quite made up for by frequent long quotations from Macaulay — I counted six — and that great royal source Crawfie (another six). Edna Healey is at her best not only in recounting anecdotes but also in presenting us with social details, such as the contents of the Buckingham Palace air-raid shelter: gilt chairs, a regency settee, smelling salts, glossy magazines — and, in the event of the roof falling in, an axe for the royals to hack their way out.

Suffering a sea change

Mark Cocker

THE Roman fort at Burgh Castle in east Norfolk is an inspiring structure. It dates from the first century, yet much of the 190-metre-long walls are remarkably intact. Towards evening when their shadows lengthen, the ruins are sufficient almost to conjure this place in its heyday, when Stablesian cavalry units wheeled in battle drill and when merchants' ships could sail nearly to the battlements themselves with Mediterranean glassware, marble from Italy, or coins for the troops from mints in Rome and Lyon.

Burgh's commanding general, known as the Count of the Saxon Shore, was one of a military triumvirate in Roman Britain, and had the task of defending East Anglia from Germanic pirate raids. It's a measure of the fort's enduring strategic importance that once these Saxon invaders settled in the fifth century they also fortified the site, as did the Normans several hundred years later. In fact, the empty walls of Burgh remain a witness to a type of seaborne conflict, but this is the imperceptibly slow struggle between generations of East Anglians and the tidal waters that deluged this low-lying landscape.

Today, as you look across from the ruins, the outcome seems to have long been decided. The nearest coastline is now 6km away, and instead of the wide estuary that confronted the Romans there is a vast panorama of grassland. The campaigns that reclaimed the area known as Halvergate marshes probably began even during Roman occupation, and over centuries local farmers rescued more of the inter-tidal saltmarshes by creating earth embankments and digging drainage dikes.

The rich alluvial soils of the flood-plain eventually became famous for good grazing. In the 18th century, Daniel Defoe called Halvergate the largest tract of meadowland in England and wrote of 40,000 cattle being driven annually from the the Scottish Highlands and put to pasture on Halvergate's lush grasslands, where these Scottish "runts" soon became "monstrously fat" and enjoyed a reputation for delicious beef.

Despite the area's economic importance, large parts of the saltmarsh still remained subject to regular flooding and could only be grazed in midsummer. These relict patches remained at the core of one of Norfolk's most impressive wilderness landscapes, until over 200 windmills were erected as part of a co-ordinated regional drainage network. By the 19th century this seemed to have asserted a final human dominance over Halvergate.

While today one can look out from Burgh on a slow-motion scene of grazing cattle herds and drifting sheep flocks, the impression of permanence belies the current situation. In East Anglia it has been calculated that global warming could inflict sea-level rises of 50cm by 2050, posing major threats to many coastal landscapes. Halvergate itself is likely to be secured by the reinforcement of existing sea defences, but elsewhere the future is less certain.

A group of wildlife organisations predicts that coastal erosion could destroy almost 800 hectares of some of the rarest coastal habitats, including reedbed and freshwater marsh. They want measures that reflect the wildlife and cultural importance of East Anglia's coastal reserves: adequate sea defences wherever these are feasible, and if protection is impracticable they believe the habitats should be recreated at new secure locations and on land currently of low nature conservation value. In short, they want a vision of sea defence that more closely approximates to an ark than a high-walled fortress that protects only a dominant minority.

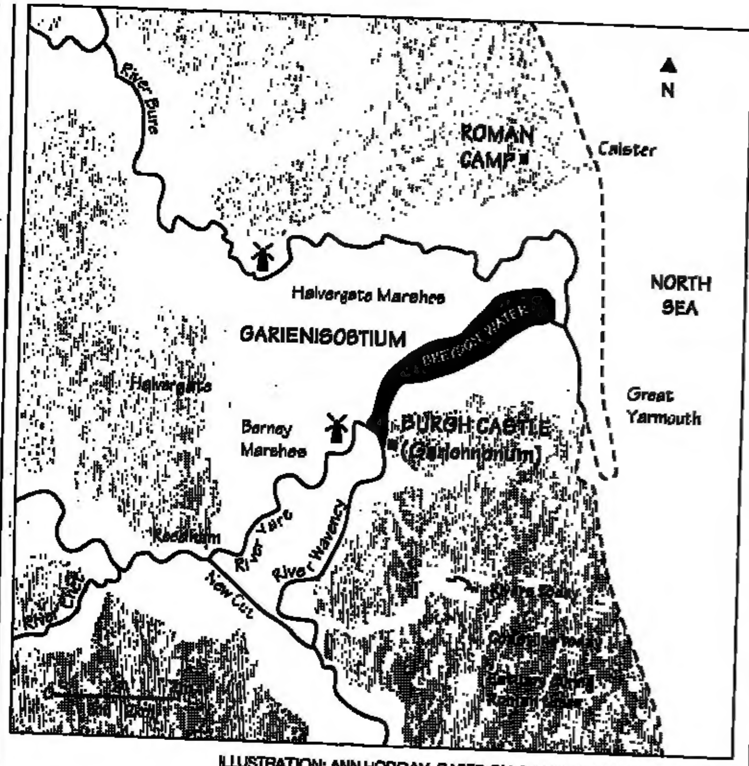


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY, BASED ON A MAP BY CHARLES SILCOCK

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
November 18 1997

Chess Leonard Barden

SPECIALLY commissioned glass sets were used last month in a tournament at Hoogeveen, in the Netherlands, which featured an imaginative win by Judit Polgar, aged 21, the strongest female player. Polgar, who has set new standards in women's chess by advancing to the fringe of the world top 10, has also led a revolution in style, as competitors in the annual world championships for girls use her dynamic play as a model.

This game shows how Polgar has mastered the technique of all-court attacks. She stops her Dutch grandmaster opponent from castling, creates central knight outposts, switches rook and queen across the board, and opens up a key file by a pawn sacrifice — all advanced techniques hard to combine in practical play.

White hoped that his centralised bishop and massed pieces guarding his king would be sufficient defence, but Polgar's rook sacrifice at the end blows him away.

Van Wely-Polgar

1 c4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 e3 Nf6 4 d4 d5 5 dxc5 e6 6 a3 Bxc5 7 b4 Bd6 8 Nf3 0-0 9 cxd5 exd5 10 Nb5? Careless; 10 Be2 is normal. **Bb8 11 Bb2?** 11 Nbd4 a5 12 b5 Nxd4 13 Nxd4 a4 favours Black, but at least White could castle.

a5! 12 bxa5 Ne4! 13 Be2 Qxa5+ 14 Kf1 Rd8 15 h3 Qb6! The uncastled king limits White's piece co-ordination, so Polgar uses her space advantage to build an attack. **16 g3 Re8 17 Qe1 Na5** En route to c4 via the square the queen vacated two moves earlier, and opening up the third rank motorway for queen and rook.

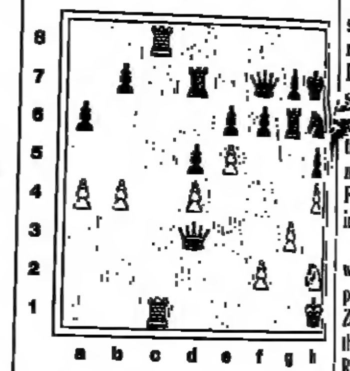
18 Bd4 Qg6 19 Kg2 Nc4 20 Nh4 Qc6 21 a4 Ra6 22 Bg4 f5! You often need at least two weak points for a decisive attack. White has managed to barricade g3, so Black aims her second front at f2.

23 Bxf5 Rf8 24 Bxc8 Qxc8 25 Ra2 Rh6 26 Qd1 g5! 27 Nf3 g4 28 hxg4 Rxh1 29 Qxh1 Qxg4 30 Nh2 Rxf2+ 31 Resigns If 31 Rxf2 Qxg3+ and Qxf2 mate.

● London's Barbican club launched a new afternoon speed chess event last Saturday, limited to 44 Fide-rated adults and to 20 invited juniors. Sponsored by Beachgold Consultants, it provided a low-cost version of the Lloyds Bank and Arc tournaments, which gave high-class experience to young talents a decade ago.

This innovatory idea costs hundreds rather than thousands of pounds, and more events are planned if further chess backers come forward.

No 2498



Boris Gulko v Anatoly Karpov, Seville 1994. Under the Soviets, Gulko was the most prominent chess refusenik of his time and was banned from playing for several years, while Karpov, the world champion, was slow to help his colleague.

When they met 10 years later, Gulko (White) had a clear advantage but played 1 R1c2? allowing Black to consolidate. Can you see the better plan that would have won and also gained symbolic revenge for Gulko's previous mistreatment?

No 2497 1 Qc8. If Kxc6 2 Bf3, or Kc6 2 Nb6, or Kc4 2 Qg8, or Ke4 2 Nf6.

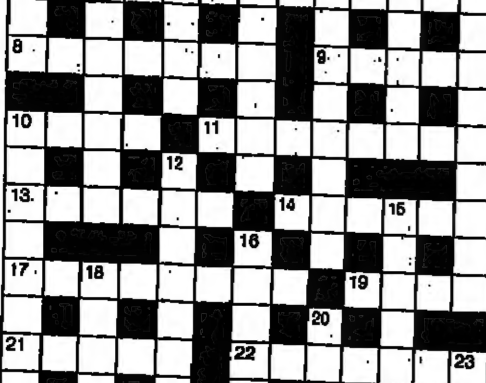
Quick crossword no. 392

Across

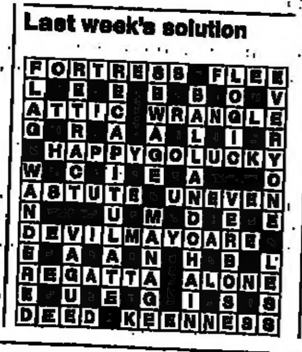
1 Manager (13)
8 Capacity — to be satisfied (7)
9 Accumulate (5)
10 Jot (4)
11 Guard (8)
13 Menace (6)
14 Abhor (6)
17 Recall (8)
19 Exclude (4)
21 Wash out (5)
22 Female singer (7)
24 Sin (13)

Down

1 Curve (3)
2 Ogre (7)
3 Want (4)
4 Sofa (6)
5 Response (8)
6 Aim — to teach (5)
7 Springing back (9)
10 Translate (9)
12 Innocuous (8)
15 Set of kettledrums (7)
16 Hot spring (6)
18 Madness (5)
20 Musical work (4)
23 Have — to confess (3)



Last week's solution



Bridge Zia Mahmood

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD geniuses with cherubic smiles and ruthless spirits casually outsmarting people four and five times their ages; rows of faces haggard with concentration; the occasional muted whoop of triumph or groan of defeat — this was the World Mind Sports Olympiad at London's Royal Festival Hall in September.

The Olympiad was the brainchild of Raymond Keene, chess grandmaster, and of Tony Buzan, psychologist and inventor of the Mind Map. It featured just about every kind of competitive intellectual sport known to mankind — ancient games such as chess, Go and backgammon; more modern creations like bridge and Scrabble; board games from the 20th century; crossword puzzles . . . There was even a Decamentathlon, a combination of 10 mind-boggling activities, in which the gold medal went to an English bridge international, Andrew Dyson.

Though there were substantial prizes, these were not what lured the best games players in the world. The thrill of competition in the true Olympic spirit, with no barriers on grounds of race, colour, age or sex, were what brought them here.

I was lucky enough to play in one of the many bridge events. To demonstrate the Olympic idea that what matters is not winning, but taking part, I had entered with a team of charming people, two of whom had never played duplicate bridge before. Although we finished seventh out of seven, we had a wonderful day.

At lunch-time our chances were looking decidedly slender, but our team was not despondent. One of them, an accomplished writer and talented newcomer to the game, asked me a question that I've heard many times before: "How should we alter our game to improve our position?" My reply took the following form...

First, think positively. Don't give up on any single hand. If you're defending, assume that the contract can be beaten, and work out what partner needs to have for this to happen. If you're declarer, assume that you can make the contract — no matter that you need four finesses and a 3-3 break to succeed. Plan your play on the assumption that a miracle is about to happen. There is nothing worse than going down in a contract that you've given up on when in fact the distribution that you needed was actually there.

Second, look for chances to double the opponents. Far too many points are missed because you're happy with the poor contract the enemy have landed in. You're afraid to double in case they escape to a better spot. Don't be! If there were a better spot, they'd probably have already reached it — that's why they're beating you at the moment. An example:

♠A 7 3 ♥Q J 10 9 ♦6 4 ♣7 6 5 [illegible]

South	West	North	East
You			
	1NT	Pass	[illegible]
Pass	2♥	Pass	[illegible]
Pass	4♥	Pass	[illegible]
?			

Double them! Though you have only three tricks in your own hand they won't make this contract. Since East could only invite game, not bid it directly over 2♥, the opponents will not have any extra values and the bad trump break is bound to be too much for them. If either opponent is stretching — or if they both are — you could well collect an 800 penalty on a "nothing" deal.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Rugby League Second Test: Gt Britain 20 Australia 12

Farrell inspires rapid revenge

Andy Wilson at Old Trafford

AFTER Wembley, and Great Britain's crushing defeat by a side representing half of Australian Rugby League, obituaries were being prepared for the international game. Laurie Daley's champions would surely thrash the hapless Poms at Old Trafford, as they had done after defeat at Wembley in 1994, to clinch the series, and a pitiful attendance would turn up at Elland Road to see the inevitable whitewash.

Instead Maurice Lindsay and his staff at the Rugby Football League reported lengthy queues at their Leeds headquarters last Sunday, such is the desire to see the decider on the other side of the city. It is true to say that the stirring performance by the inspirational Andy Farrell's team here has saved the international game.

Moreover, it is the Australians who should be more grateful. Competition from Great Britain and New Zealand is their best card against the growing threat from Australian Rules football's move into Sydney and Brisbane.

This is the fourth consecutive series to reach the third Test at 1-1. In both 1990 and 1994, however, Australia went to Elland Road with momentum, having come back from defeat at Wembley with victory at Old Trafford. This time the advantage lies with Great Britain. After last Saturday's initial euphoria, there was a feeling of quiet confidence among the home players that the series could, and would, be won.

The feeling was summed up by Paul Broadbent, the Sheffield Eagles prop and captain, who set a towering lead for the British pack. "After Wembley we were all devastated," he said. "But we've turned it round. We dominated them in the forwards the way they dominated us in the first Test. And I can't see any reason why we can't do it again." With that he departed for Castleford to his wife and children; the celebrations were not exactly wild.

The coach Andy Goodway did not get carried away. When asked for some patriotic drum-beating he growled: "It's just a game that we've won. We could still lose 2-1 and that's as bad as losing 3-0. It's still failure."

Jason Robinson scores for Great Britain PHOTOGRAPH: ROSS KINNAIRD

Australia did not play badly here but arguably they played only as well as they were allowed. However, they could still have won had Russell Richardson's pass found Darren Smith in a late breakaway, and many of their problems were self-inflicted. The captain Daley and the coach John Lang identified indiscipline as the single biggest cause of their defeat — a polite way of blaming Gorden Tallis.

The rampaging Brisbane Broncos second-row, who was outstanding at Wembley, played like a pantomime villain at Old Trafford, living down to the reputation he earned in Britain for his astonishing attack on Wigan's Terry O'Connor in the World Club Championship.

Having bought Farrell's dummy to allow Great Britain to respond to Steve Walters's opening try, Tallis thundered into Chris Joynt to earn his first rebuke from the referee. He was later placed on report by the official for a reckless high tackle on Alan Hunte, and spent 10 minutes in the sin-bin after conceding the 65th minute penalty that allowed Farrell to kick the fifth of his six goals.

Tallis has already been cleared for Elland Road after winning the support of manager Robert Finch, but Goodway would surely be delighted if he were left out. For all his faults last Saturday he gave Great Britain problems every time he touched the ball or made a tackle.

With Brett Mullins almost certainly out after bursting a blood vessel in his leg in the first half, Australia may also have selection problems in the three-quarters; Goodway is unlikely to change personnel.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Chelsea come in from the cold

CHELSEA, blighted by Arctic conditions in their 3-2 first leg, second round defeat by Tromso in the Cup Winners' Cup, skated past their Norwegian opponents 7-1 in the return match at Stamford Bridge. Tromso's defence melted away against a determined Chelsea side who went through to the quarter-finals 9-4 on aggregate. Gianluca Vialli was the toast of the London club with a hat-trick.

Dan Petrescu put Chelsea ahead with a brilliant header and Vialli forced the second under goalkeeper Tor Grenersen. Bjorn Johansen levelled the tie with a 25-yarder before Gianfranco Zola curled home a free-kick from 20 yards. Frank Leboeuf added his name to the score-sheet with a converted penalty. A shot and a header completed Vialli's treble before Petrescu completed the rout.

Cole . . . England recall

Chelsea manager Ruud Gullit said his side's emphatic victory underlined the real gulf between the two teams. Another hat-trick, this time by Manchester United striker Andy Cole, kept up the English club's unbeaten record in the Champions League as they swept aside Feyenoord 3-1 in Rotterdam. With United firmly in the driving seat and playing with an air of invincibility about them, the game became ill-tempered in the later stages. Denis Irwin was stretchered off after a lunge from Paul Bosvelt, and Gary Neville was elbowed in the face by Julio Cruz.

Cole's burst of scoring form — he got five goals in two Premiership games before this hat-trick — earned him a recall to the England squad for the World Cup warm-up against Cameroon at Wembley on Saturday. Seven other United players are also included in the squad.

In the other match involving a British club in the Champions League, Newcastle United, deprived of their strikers Alan Shearer and Faustino Asprilla through injury, went down 2-0 at home to PSV Eindhoven. The Magpies now have only an outside chance of making the quarter-finals.

Aston Villa were in a bouyant mood after their 2-1 victory over Athletic Bilbao in the Uefa Cup, Ian Taylor and Dwight Yorke finding the net for Villa. "If we can repeat that performance we can beat anybody," said Villa striker Savo Milosevic. Villa's opponents in the third round on November 25 will be Steaua Bucharest of Romania.

Liverpool beat Strasbourg 2-0 at Anfield but went out of the competition 3-2 on aggregate after a disastrous first leg. "The players are disappointed but since that first tie their attitude and approach have been first class," said manager Roy Evans.

FIRST Division West Bromwich Albion defender Shane Nicholson was banned and charged with misconduct after failing a Football Association drugs test. He tested positive for traces of amphetamine at the club's training ground last month — the only player to have tested positive this season from 500 samples. He has 14 days to answer the charge.

SOUTH AFRICA beat world champions Sri Lanka by four wickets to lift the Jubilee Trophy in Lahore. Lance Klusener missed his maiden century by one run but helped his side score 210-6 to romp home with 9.2 overs to spare.

In Brisbane, Australia beat New Zealand by 186 runs in the first Test. Glenn McGrath was the hero of the final day, taking five for 32 as the Kiwis collapsed to 132, having been set 319 runs to win.

PETER NICOL became the first Scottish squash player to reach a World Open final by beating the Welshman Alex Gough in Kuala Lumpur, but failed to become the first Briton to capture the title, going down to top seed Australian Rodney Eyles 15-11, 15-12, 15-12.

THE Williams and McLaren Formula One teams were summoned by motor racing's governing body to answer allegations that they conspired to fix the result of last month's European Grand Prix, which gave Mika Hakkinen his first win. Michael Schumacher was also appearing before the FIA's World Council to explain his controversial collision with Jacques Villeneuve in the same race.

ENGLAND'S new Rugby Union coach Clive Woodward named five new caps for Saturday's Test against Australia at Twickenham. Giving his reasons for the 12 changes to the side that lost to Australia in July, he said: "It's simple. These are the best 15 players in their position at the moment." The debutants are Leicester centre Will Greenwood, Bath pair Matt Perry and Andy Long, Sale wing Dave Rees, and Wasps prop Will Green. Others in the line-up are: Mike Catt, Adedayo Adebayo, Alex King, Kyran Bracken, Jason Leonard, Martin Johnson, Garath Archer, Lawrence Dallaglio, Tony Diprose and Richard Hill.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Arsenal 3, Manchester United 2; Blackburn Rovers 3, Everton 2; Chelsea 2, West Ham United 1; Coventry City 2, Newcastle United 2; Crystal Palace 1, Aston Villa 1; Leeds United 4, Derby County 3; Leicester City 0, Wimbledon 1; Liverpool 4, Tottenham Hotspur 0; Sheffield Wed 5, Bolton Wanderers 0; Southampton 4, Barnsley 1.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE:
Division One: Birminghm 1, Norwich 2; Bury 0, Portsmth 2; Crewe 2, Oxford 1; Ipswich 2, Sheff Utd 2; Middlesbro 3, QPR 0; Reading 1, Stockport 0; Stoke 3, Wolves 0; Sunderlnd 1, Nottm For 1; Swindon 1, Bradford 0; Tranmere 1, Port Vale 2; WBA 1, Charlton 0.

Division Two: Blackpool 2, Burnley 1; Brentford 1, Bristol City 4; Bristol R 2, Fulham 3; Chesterfld 1, Grimsby 0; Luton 1, Preston 3; Millwall 1, Carlisle 1; Oldham P, Gillingham P; Plymouth 3, Bournemth 0; Southend 1, Wigan 0; Walsall 0, Watford 0; Wrexham 1, Northmptn 0; York 2, Wycombe 0.

Division Three: Barnet 1, Doncaster 1; Brighton 1, Rotherham 2; Cardiff 1, Torquay 1; Hull 1, Shrewsbry 4; Leyton O 1, Chester 0; Macclesfld 3, Cambridge 1; Mansfield 3, Scarboro 2; Notts Co 1, Exeter 1; Peterboro 1, Darlington 1; Rochdale 2, Colchester 1; Sc'thorpe 1, Hartlepool 1; Swansea 0, Lincoln 0.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE:
Premier Division: Dundee Utd 5, Aberdeen 0; Hearts 2, Hibernian 0; Motherwell 0, Kilmarnk 1; Rangers 1, Celtic 0; St Johnstn 0, Dunfrmline 2.

First Division: Falkirk 3, Stirling A 2; Morton 3, St Mirren 0; Partick 1, Airdrie 2; Raith 0, Dundee 1.

Second Division: Brechin 2, Stranraer 2; Clydebank 1, Forfar 1; Clyde 3, East Fife 0; Queen Sth 1, Livingston 0; Invrnss CT 4; Stenhsmr 1.

Third Division: Albion 2, Ross Co 0; Alloa 1, Dumbarton 2; Arbroath 4, Berwick 1; Cowdnbth 3, Montrose 1; Queens Pk 0, E. Stirling 1.

Rugby Union

Brive draw Wasps' sting

Robert Armstrong

BRIVE displayed a repertoire worthy of European champions with a brilliantly-crafted three-try victory in the quarter finals of the Heineken Cup at Loftus Road last Sunday. Six penalties by Wasps' Gareth Rees never looked like being sufficient to overcome a side of grace, style and power.

The main side-effect of Wasps' defeat was to hand Bath, the only surviving English club, a home draw for their semi-final against Pau. Toulouse, the 1996 champions, will be involved in an all-French semi-final at home to Brive. The final will be staged at a French venue on January 31.

Brive were applauded off the field by a spirited Wasps side that would probably admit in private that they were outclassed. Each time Wasps edged in front the holders demonstrated a rare ability to raise their game and score further tries.

"We showed passion and commitment, but ultimately we were not able to finish off our attacking moves," said Lawrence Dallaglio, the Wasps captain.

Wasps were far from dead and buried in the closing stages as they showed with several swashbuckling sorties by their loose forwards, yet Brive always seemed able to dip into their box of surprises and pull out another inventive ploy.

The London side had to defend desperately to prevent the holders finishing with another imperious score.

Brive could not have shown a more lethal sense of timing, putting Wasps under pressure with converted tries at the start and finish of the first half.

Dallaglio was left for dead when the Brive full-back Sebastian Viars made a blindside break down the left touchline before off-loading to Sebastian Carrat. The left wing had time to cruise towards the posts and make a simple conversion kick for Christophe Lamaison.

On the stroke of half-time an error by the Wasps' scrum-half Martyn Wood, who lost the ball in midfield, allowed Olivier Magne and Philippe Carbonneau to set up an old-fashioned foot-rush down the left. Shane Roiser failed to hack the ball away from the edge of his 22 and in a twinkling the rangy flanker, Loic van der Linden had crashed over.

Between times Brive ran through the full gamut of infringements which gave the Wasps' goalkicker Rees the opportunity to slot home five first-half penalties.

From the restart Wasps applied sustained pressure, but all the English champions had to show for their efforts was another penalty by Rees after the Brive pack dropped a scrum.

In the other quarter-final matches Pau defeated Leicester 35-18, Toulouse trounced Harlequins 51-10 and Bath beat Cardiff 32-21.

● The All Blacks delivered a clear warning of their awesome form when they beat Llanelli by 81-3 in their opening tour match.